



THE
LIFE AND TIMES
OF
LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH.

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VOL. III.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,
Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.
1838.

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CHAPTER I.

Loss of Hesdin.—Capture of St. Venant and Mardyke.—Siege of Dunkirk.—Battle of the Dunes.—Fall of Dunkirk.—Siege of Bergues.—Gallantry of the King.—He falls dangerously ill.—Intrigues at Court.—Louis's demeanour at the approach of death.—He recovers.—Bergues, Dixmuid, and Gravelines taken.—Continued successes of Turenne.—Prospects of peace.

ALL the subtle policy of Mazarin proved insufficient to prevent a loss with which France was menaced at this time. The city of Hesdin, though by no means so important as that of Peronne, was nevertheless of great consequence to the safety of the French frontier, and especially to any operations which might take place in the Calesis or the Boulonnois. Towards the end of the year 1657, some apprehensions had been entertained in regard to the feelings of the garrison, several of the principal

officers of which had been suspected of taking part in the intrigues of the Duchess of Chatillon, Hocquincourt, and others. The governor Belbrune died about the same time, and Mazarin immediately appointed a new governor, by whom he thought the place might be preserved for the king. The two officers, however, who had taken the command upon the death of Belbrune, La Rivière and La Fargue, had been gained by the Prince de Condé, and, shutting the gates against the new governor, they allowed the Spaniards to take possession of the city. In vain Mazarin had attempted to bring them to a sense of their duty; in vain he tempted them with offers of reward and promotion. The effects of the civil war still remained; each man thought he had a right to set up his loyalty to auction, and the Spaniards, outbidding the Cardinal, got possession of Hesdin.

Towards the end of the same year, Turenne having laid siege to St. Venant, and taken it while the Spaniards attacked Ardres; and having also compelled the Spanish army to decamp from before the latter place, and captured Mardyke, which, according to treaty, he immediately delivered to the English, made every preparation for commencing the ensuing year by the siege of one of the other two cities which France had stipulated with Cromwell to attack. The chief point of consideration was, whether to besiege Dunkirk or Gravelines first; and for the purpose of giving his soldiers good

winter-quarters, Turenne made a movement for the attack of the latter place. The Spaniards, however, inundated the country by opening the sluices, and the French general was obliged to delay all further operations till 1658.

In the beginning of that year, however, the determination of the court of France was fixed by the dictation of Cromwell, who summoned, or rather commanded, Mazarin at once to commence the siege of Dunkirk, which, like Mardyke, was to form part of England's lion-share of the prey. What the Protector demanded was difficult and dangerous for France to undertake: Dunkirk was, in fact, a fortress within a line of fortresses, and to attempt the siege of that place before Bergues, Gravelines, and Furnes had been taken, afforded the Spaniards an opportunity, if they chose to employ it, of investing Turenne in his own camp, and hemming him in between that line of strong places and the well-garrisoned and strongly-defended city that he was attacking. All that Cromwell could offer to compensate for these disadvantages was the co-operation of the British fleet, which in fine weather afforded the means of supplying the army plentifully with provisions, but could not insure forage for the horses, and might at any time be driven off by bad weather. The demand, however, was peremptory: Mazarin knew that Spain was making immense offers to the Protector, and Turenne was forced to obey.

Early in the month of May, then, that great gene-

ral made his dispositions for attacking Dunkirk ; and at the same time, the Spaniards, well aware of his purpose, prepared everything for offering a vigorous resistance. The Marquis de Lede, an officer of great skill and experience, threw himself into the place with two thousand five hundred infantry and eight hundred cavalry ; the sluices were opened, the dykes cut, the country around covered with water ; and two strong forts were erected upon the great dyke going from Dunkirk to Bergues, in each of which were placed one thousand men. A number of well-fortified redoubts garnished the various canals and rivers in the neighbourhood ; and everything promised one of the most important sieges which had yet been seen during the war.

Over all the obstacles that were thus opposed to him, the perseverance of Turenne and the confidence of his soldiers at length triumphed. The troops marched through the inundation ; the artillery and baggage passed over roads constructed on purpose for them ; the redoubts were forced one after the other, and the outposts of the Spaniards driven into the city.

In the mean while, the Spanish army, under the Prince de Condé and Don Juan of Austria, advanced towards the city on the side of Furnes, in order to encourage the besieged, and, ultimately, to attack the French in their lines. But, on the other hand, Cromwell, in accordance with his promise, despatched the British fleet to blockade the

place by sea. Having formed his lines around, Turenne, in order to cut off the least communication between the besieged city and Nieuport or Gravelines, caused a strong stockade to be constructed, which ran into the ocean farther than the lowest water-mark, beyond which, again, were attached several armed barques, the fire of which might rake the line of the stockade in case of attack. As soon as the lines were constructed, six thousand English landed from the fleet, under the command of General Lockart* and General Morgan.

The court in the mean while had advanced to Mardyke; and the young King, with Mazarin, visited the camp of Turenne, and inspected the works that he was constructing. Sickness, however, soon began to appear in the camp: a number of the dead, who had perished in the campaign of the last year, and had been buried in the sands in the neighbourhood of Mardyke, having become exposed by the wind and rain, vitiated the air, and with the exhalations from the inundation of the country, spread a pestilential fever around, while the grasping avarice of Mazarin, (Madame de Motteville assures us,) who took upon himself the office of commissary, often created great scarcity and much inconvenience in the camp.

The military operations, however, proceeded

* I find the name thus written in two editions of the *Memoirs of the Duke of York*, afterwards James II.

vigorously on both parts : a number of gallant sorties were made by the garrison, but were repelled by the French troops ; and two regular attacks were opened, one on the part of the English, the other on the part of the French. Thus, several advantages had been gained by Turenne, when the army of Condé and Don Juan advanced, as we have said, and encamped within the distance of two cannon shots of the French lines. Turenne immediately proceeded to reconnoitre them, and, judging that their intention was to attack him, immediately determined to forestall them and commence the battle himself. Having given orders to draw out the army from the lines early on the following morning, Turenne sent to notify to the English general Lockart his intention of attacking the Spaniards, and also to inform him of his reasons for so doing. Lockart cut the messenger short, however, replying, with characteristic brevity, that he was quite willing to trust to Turenne and would hear his reasons after the battle.

The Spanish army had advanced without their artillery, baggage, or even sufficient ammunition, in order to encourage the besieged ; and they were now only waiting the arrival of their cannon before they made their attack upon Turenne. At five o'clock on the following morning, however, the French troops were seen issuing from their lines by the Spaniards, who were encamped among the sand-hills called the Dunes ; and the Duke of York,

who had quitted France to join Spain on Mazarin's signing a treaty with Cromwell, having advanced to reconnoitre, returned and informed Don Juan that Turenne was about to attack him with all his disposable forces. Don Juan would not believe it, asserting that the intention of the French marshal was but to drive back his advanced guard. Condé, however, coming up at the same moment, confirmed the intelligence brought by the Duke of York, and besought the Spanish generals to make their dispositions for battle as fast as possible. Still Don Juan replied coldly, and Condé, irritated at his indifference, turned to the young Duke of Gloucester, who was by his side, and asked him if he had ever seen a battle. The Duke replied, "No;" and Condé rejoined, "Very well, then, you will see how to lose one in half an hour!"

After wasting much time, Don Juan and the other Spanish generals became convinced by the movements of Turenne that he really intended to attack them, and hastened to make what dispositions the circumstances admitted. Don Juan commanded on the right towards the sea, and kept his principal force upon one of the sand-hills, with his cavalry behind him, stretching down towards the water. Condé commanded on the left; but his position was so embarrassed with ditches and other impediments, that he could but draw up three or four squadrons of his cavalry in one line. But the great error which caused the principal disaster

of the day was committed by Don Juan of Austria. The tide when he made his dispositions was high, but beginning to fall ; and he, conceiving that the French cavalry could not pass along the shore, had neglected to defend the strand, which might have been done with ease. On the left of Turenne's position was the Marquis of Castelnau, and Turenne, seeing the error of his adversary, did not fail to take advantage of it ; while some of the British frigates, as if seeing the principal point on which the defeat of the Spaniards would turn, came in shore as close as possible, and kept up a tremendous fire upon the right of the Spanish army.

The English infantry under General Morgan, placed exactly opposite to the heights on which Don Juan had drawn up his troops, received an order to charge at about eight o'clock in the morning, while the Marquis of Castelnau was at the same time commanded to march along the strand and take the troops of Don Juan in flank. The English advanced at once to the charge, but were received with strong determination by the Spanish pikemen ; and it was not till after a very severe struggle that they obtained possession of the heights. But, just at the same moment, the Marquis of Castelnau, with the cavalry of the French left, appeared on the right of the Spanish army, and charging it vigorously in flank, completed the rout in that quarter.

While this was going on, the Marquis of Crequi,

with the cavalry of the French right, had charged Condé, while Turenne remained in the centre watching the progress of the battle on each wing. Condé, however, met the charge of his countrymen, as might be expected, drove Crequi back at the point of the sword, broke the first ranks of his cavalry, and seeing that the battle was lost on the centre and right, made one of those gallant and brilliant efforts for which he was so distinguished, to cut his way through, force the French lines, and relieve Dunkirk in spite of the French victory. Turenne, however, knew Condé, understood the design, and saw the danger; and hastening to the spot himself at the head of fresh troops, assailed the prince at once in front and on both flanks. The fight then became tremendous. Condé rallied his cavalry three times and led them back to the charge, and seeing the whole fortune of the day depending upon his example, fought hand to hand with the adversary like a common soldier, exposing himself every moment to be killed or taken. Fresh troops, however, came up each instant to the support of Turenne, but none arrived to succour Condé; and after having followed him gallantly for some time, his own men began to abandon him, and he was forced to retire.

Doing what he could to cover the retreat, Condé made the best of his way towards Furnes, and the battle ended by the following characteristic announcement of his victory despâtched by Turenne

to his wife :— “ The enemies have come upon us ; thank God, they have been beaten ! I have worked somewhat hard all day, so I shall wish you good night and go to bed.”

Notwithstanding the defeat of the Spanish army, which took place on the 14th of June, Dunkirk did not immediately surrender, and the garrison showed a determination of resisting to the last. The activity and energy of the Marquis de Lede was beyond all praise, but he was not destined to defend much longer, against Turenne, a place which he had as gallantly defended, twelve years before, against Condé. A body of Italian soldiers belonging to the garrison having given way in an attack made by the French, he put himself at their head to rally them, but at that moment received a wound of which he died on the 23rd of June. On the same day the garrison demanded to capitulate, and on the 25th surrendered the town, after having defended it bravely for eighteen days. Dunkirk was immediately given up to the English, and the siege of Bergues was then undertaken by the French army.

An anecdote of Louis himself is told by Bussy, in speaking of the siege of Bergues, which displays the natural intrepidity of the young king’s character in a manner worthy of remark. As Bussy was returning after having effected the investment of the town, he encountered Louis riding towards it, and being addressed by the monarch, of course followed

him as he rode on. A very severe fire of musketry and artillery was taking place from the walls, but still Louis advanced till he was far within musket-shot, talking and asking questions of the count, apparently with the most perfect indifference, or, to use Bussy's own term, "like a good soldier of fortune." How near Louis would have gone cannot be told, had not the Maréchal du Plessis arrived, galloping with all speed, and asked Bussy, furiously, where he was leading the king. Bussy replied, that he was not leading the king anywhere, but that it was the king who led the rest. Du Plessis replied, still angrily, that he might see very well that the king had advanced too far, and the dispute was likely to have run high, when Louis exclaimed, laughing, "Do not be in a passion, marshal!" and, turning his horse, rode away.

Two days after, however, a more imminent danger befel the young King. On the evening of the 29th of June he was seized with symptoms of illness, and all the marks of a typhus fever of the most malignant kind soon discovered themselves. The whole court was in consternation, the queen in despair, and Mazarin in a state of anxiety and apprehension which deprived him of all the resources of that art which usually concealed his emotions. Foreseeing that his rule would terminate with the life of Louis, he took every precaution for the purpose of carrying his treasures out of France; but he began to pay court also to those who were about

the person of the king's younger brother, and even to several of that prince's attendants whom he had maltreated on former occasions.

The young King was carried to Calais, in his carriage, as to a more healthy spot ; but the disease only became worse every hour ; the physicians declared that the case was beyond hope ; and Bussy assures us that a number of the courtiers even went and congratulated the young Duke of Anjou on his accession to the throne.

Louis himself does not seem to have lost his senses or his presence of mind ; he spoke with calmness of his approaching fate, and, sending for Mazarin, he said to him, " You have always been one of my best friends : the queen, my mother, loves me too much to tell me the danger in which I am ; do not flatter me in the least, speak to me openly in order that I may look into my own conscience and make preparation for death." He spoke in the same strain several times, showing no weak clinging to the temporal crown that seemed about to pass away, but looking forward from the brink of the grave into eternity with that calm firmness which might well do honour to a king.

Mazarin was too much agitated and terrified to use any concealment ; with fears and sighs he acknowledged to Louis, at once, the danger in which he was ; and the young monarch only seemed grateful to him for not having concealed his situation.

A physician of great repute, however, was at

length brought from Abbeville, and declaring that the king's case was by no means hopeless, he obtained permission to administer to him a remedy, which, there is every reason to believe, was merely antimonial wine. Louis was so much relieved by the first emetic that he willingly took a second dose, and from that day the fever abated and health gradually returned.

Joy and satisfaction spread throughout France; but several of the courtiers, who had too openly suffered to appear the intrigues which are always carried on at such times by the low and the base, found themselves suddenly punished by exile from the court. No part of the king's resentment, however, extended to his brother the Duke of Anjou, who, it appears, had grieved sincerely for his brother's danger, and had not allowed any feelings of ambition to weaken the ties of nature.

Louis heard from his mother and attendants that his brother had wept bitterly when they would not suffer him to visit the sick chamber for fear of the infection, and, probably, learned to feel towards him a greater degree of affection than he had done before.

During the king's illness Bergues surrendered, and Furnes was also captured, with very little resistance, on the 3rd of July, as well as Dixmuid, in which Condé had left four hundred men. Turenne was inclined to push these successes still farther, but letters from Mazarin, announcing that the king

was at extremity, caused him to pause and wait the event.

As soon, however, as news of Louis's convalescence reached the camp, the siege of Gravelines was undertaken, and while Turenne covered the operations, La Ferté advanced and invested that place. The defence was vigorous, but the Spanish army could give it no support, and, after six-and-twenty days of active resistance, Gravelines surrendered on the 30th of August.

After the capture of Gravelines, Mazarin followed the court to Paris, to which city the young king had been removed as soon as possible after his recovery. He took, however, La Ferté with him, and Turenne remaining single in command, advanced with a strong corps into Flanders, leaving sufficient forces encamped near Hesdin, to secure the frontier. His manœuvres to withdraw the enemy from the line of the Lys would be tedious to detail; but, by detaching parties which foraged to the very gates of Brussels, he succeeded in his attempt, and in a very short space of time made himself master of Oudenarde, Menin, and Ypres. The latter was the only town which required a regular siege; but the Prince de Ligne having thrown himself into it, after having lost a large part of his corps in a skirmish with the French marshal, resisted vigorously for several days, and at length gained an honourable capitulation.

Turenne passed the rest of the campaign in

strengthening himself in the multitude of places he had acquired; and, taking such measures that the Spanish army scarcely dared to show itself in the field, he remained till the commencement of December in the heart of the enemy's country, contributing not a little, by the formidable aspect which he gave to France, to render Spain desirous of peace at any sacrifice.

Everything was now tending to the pacification of Europe. The arms of France had been successful on the side of Italy, as well as on the side of Flanders; while in Catalonia, where she could have held no power without increasing the difficulties of pacification, she had been altogether unsuccessful. The Portuguese had gained a signal victory over Spain, and raised the siege of Elvas; the Emperor Leopold, though elected in spite of the intrigues of France, had been obliged, by the league of the Rhine, to engage in the most solemn manner to observe the treaty of Munster; and Cromwell had laid his fiery brow on the calm pillow of the grave. Everything then promised that the sword would be sheathed, and Turenne, after having taken in one campaign twelve fortified cities, and compelled the armies of Spain to quit the field, returned to Paris, determined, as far as possible, to contribute to a general pacification.

CHAPTER II.

Mildness of Mazarin's government.—Trial of Chenailles.—Character of Mazarin.—Anecdote told by Bussy.—Measures against duellists.—Amusements introduced by Mazarin.—Gambling.—Anecdotes.—Corruption—Luxury.—Peculation—Finances.—Anecdotes of Fouquet.—Marie de Mancini—her conduct towards the King.—Marriage of the King proposed—with Henrietta of England—with a Princess of Portugal—with Margaret of Savoy—with Maria Theresa of Spain.—Meeting between the Courts of France and Savoy.—Apprehensions of Spain—Pimentel sent to Lyons—Marriage agreed on with Spain.—Preliminary treaty.—Louis and Marie de Mancini—Conferences and treaty of the Pyrenees—Journey of Grammont to Madrid.—Marriage of Louis.—Entrance of the King and Queen into Paris.—Pacific aspect of Europe.—Internal state of France during the last year of Mazarin's ministry.—His death

DURING the time which elapsed between the return of Mazarin to Paris and the conclusion of the year 1658, the domestic affairs of France were not less complicated, but at the same time were not less prosperous, than her military proceedings. From time to time, indeed, some slight disturbances in the provinces took place; some half-dozen nobles broke out into revolt; some of the former factions were for a moment revived; some hopeless conspiracy was formed against the state or against the minister: but still, triumphing over them all, the good fortune of Mazarin was predominant, and he was enabled to crush them one after the other like empty bubbles.

These petty movements which followed a long period of terrible and tumultuous agitation, affected very little the general welfare of France at the

time; but each attempt at insurrection by its rise and its suppression confirmed the renewed vigour of the royal authority, and paved the way for that despotic rule which Louis ere long was to exercise over his people. At the same time, they all served to show not only the subtle skill of Mazarin in detecting and frustrating the efforts of his enemies, but also the clement and merciful nature of the man. Many as were the errors of the cardinal, his faults and his vices were not of a harsh or vindictive character. Never, perhaps, was there less blood shed by the executioner under any minister than ever lived than under Mazarin, and certainly there never was so little shed by any one who was so strongly, so frequently, so virulently opposed. Neither in prosperity nor in adversity did he ever show himself to be sanguinary, and he has even been accused of evincing too much clemency, so as to suffer the royal authority to be weakened for want of due severity.

We cannot but reverence the fault, if it was one; and in judging of his conduct in this respect, we must remember that had he punished sternly the inferior actors in the various conspiracies which took place from time to time, he could not have suffered the high leaders to escape unchastised when they fell into his hands; and thus, by every head that he brought to the block, he would have entailed upon himself the necessity of bringing others there also in his own justification.

Such, however, was not the plan on which he acted: conspiracies were put down without any severe punishment; rebels were taken with arms in their hands, and merely banished from the kingdom or mulcted in large fines; the partisans of Condé whom that prince led to battle against his very sovereign in person were often captured without suffering any other infliction than imprisonment, and, in more than one instance, were changed by the clemency of the minister from fiery and dangerous enemies, to steadfast, energetic, and invaluable friends. Were an instance of this happy effect of lenity wanting, we might cite the case of Bouteville, afterwards famous as the Marshal Duke of Luxembourg, in whom, had he been doomed to death by Mazarin when taken in actual rebellion, France would have lost the genius which supported the crown at a moment of the greatest difficulty.

It was not, however, by the nobles and the military alone that the government of Mazarin, even after its firm re-establishment, was treasonably assailed, and yet maintained its character of clemency; nor is the lenient spirit in which the minister acted, even after repeated causes for anger and indignation, more strongly displayed in anything than in the famous trial of Chenailles. The conduct of Marshal Hocquincourt at Peronne might well have made Mazarin resolve to mark any further instance of treachery with the utmost severity; but such was not the case.

In the end of 1656, it was discovered that a gentleman of the name of Claude Valle de Chenailles, one of the councillors of the parliament—of that body whose business and duty it was above all things to support the monarch in opposing the enemies of the country—had entered into a treasonable correspondence with an officer of the garrison of St. Quentin, for the purpose of inducing him to betray that city to the Prince de Condé, then in command of the Spanish army. The criminal was arrested, together with the officer whom he had endeavoured to séduce, and confined in the Bastile; and the officer, whose name was Desprez, gave a full and circumstantial account of all that had taken place, having previously revealed the whole to the court, and received its directions how to act.

It appeared upon the trial that Mazarin had long known all the proceedings of Chenailles, who was a relation of Hervart, the famous financier, and that to the latter the minister had made very severe complaints, long before, regarding the conduct of his relative, conveying to him, through Hervart, a warning to abandon his treasonable designs. Chenailles, however, was not to be deterred, and continued to carry on active measures for the purpose of obtaining an entrance for Condé into St. Quentin. Having some reason to imagine that he was fully discovered and was likely to be arrested, he at length artfully induced Hervart to go to Mazarin, and reveal to the minister, on his part, a por-

tion of the proceedings which had taken place, with a view of creating a belief that he had merely entered into the conspiracy for the purpose of frustrating it, and betraying it to the court. But Mazarin, already aware of all the facts, saw through the deceit at once, and immediately cut Hervart short, exclaiming, "I would give fifty thousand crowns that Valle had never been allied to your family, or that he had not fallen into this error."

Chenailles, however, still continued his efforts to deceive the minister, while at the same time he carried on his intrigues in St. Quentin, and was at length arrested, as we have said, fancying that his relationship to Hervart and the means he had taken to blind Mazarin would insure him immunity. His guilt in every instance was established on the trial, and it clearly appeared from the examination of Hervart and from the deposition of Desprez, that Mazarin, though he had long known the treasonable practices of the prisoner, had employed no means with him but those of remonstrance till he was compelled to take severer measures. After an ingenious and lengthened defence, Chenailles was condemned; and there can be no earthly doubt, as his guilt was clear and its amount was nothing less than high-treason, that one word from Mazarin would have brought his head to the block. The minister contented himself, however, with requiring that he should be banished from the realm; and sentence was accordingly pronounced against him.

On the 9th of April 1657, the award of the court

was put in execution : he was banished for ever from the kingdom, forbidden to return on pain of death, his estates and all his goods and chattels were confiscated, his robes stripped off his back, and, being led on foot by two ushers to the Porte St. Honoré, was put forth from the city, and enjoined to make his way straight out of the kingdom.

We shall pause in this place to notice some of the other points of peculiarity in Mazarin's character ; a character which, like that of almost every celebrated person, has been estimated in the most different and contradictory manner, by various persons, according to their political feelings or private prejudices. Eulogists have written his life, and represented him as all excellence, when he had his full share of vices and weaknesses ; and enemies have depicted him with a dark and sombre pencil, leaving none of those brighter and fairer points which his character really possessed.

Although Mazarin had shown in some of the tumults in Paris unequivocal symptoms of personal fear, and although he once or twice, when it suited his temporary purpose, affected to be apprehensive of assassination, we do not find that in reality he was at all timidly suspicious in regard to attempts upon his life, which is almost always the weakness of a cruel and tyrannical disposition. An anecdote which is told by Bussy, who had himself a great share in the transaction, shows the character of Mazarin and his generous feelings in these respects in a fair and interesting light, and at the same time

affords some curious traits of the times in which it took place.

In the year 1646, the Count de Bussy Rabutin had attached to him, as his esquire, a certain soldier of fortune named Grandchamp, whom he himself describes as addicted to every sort of vice. "Robbery and assassination," says Bussy, "were as common to him as eating and drinking," and yet the count himself, a French nobleman of distinguished family, the cousin and correspondent of the graceful Madame de Sévigné, continued to keep about his person for three years the unprincipled villain whom he thus depicts. He was at length obliged to send him away on account of his drunkenness, but obtained for him a post in the light horse of the guard, from which corps his crimes soon drove him with disgrace. Bussy then once more took this worthy personage into his service, and, strange to say, employed him, as he himself informs us, in his private affairs, till he was deprived of him in the following manner.

Bussy himself was always entangled in some dispute or negotiation with the court; and, having occasion to send a letter, requiring an immediate answer, to Mazarin, who was then at Fontainebleau, he intrusted it to Grandchamp. To the surprise of his master, however, the count's agent returned without a reply, and without any plausible reason for not bringing one, displaying at the same time a good deal of confusion and appre-

hension. Bussy took no notice of his servant's agitation, but sent him back again for an answer to the court, which had by this time removed to Paris.

The count afterwards discovered that while at Fontainebleau his worthy ambassador had been suddenly informed that a friend and companion, named Forestier, with whom he had probably often shared the spoils of others, had been arrested at Nemours for crimes in which they were both concerned, and had been broken on the wheel. Although Mazarin himself had directed him to wait for an answer, this unexpected intelligence smote Grandchamp with such terror, that he had fled from the court at once. When sent back to the minister, in Paris, however, he met with one of the cardinal's guards with whom he was acquainted, and, having obtained an invitation to share his room while in Paris, he fancied himself quite in security in the Louvre, under the same roof as the cardinal. He was, nevertheless, there arrested, conveyed to Nemours, and received the same reward for his crimes which his comrade Forestier had met with, confessing at the place of execution a multitude of acts of far deeper turpitude than that for which he suffered.

The part of the tale which affects Mazarin is as follows:—When Grandchamp was arrested in the apartments of the cardinal, two concealed daggers were found upon his person; and there were not

wanting many to strive hard for the purpose of proving to Mazarin that the Count de Bussy had sent Grandchamp to Paris with evil intentions towards him. But Mazarin treated their insinuations with scorn and laughter, and immediately wrote to Bussy, assuring him frankly of his unaltered esteem and regard.

Such, there is every reason to believe, was the conduct of that minister on all ordinary occasions of this kind ; and indeed it harmonizes well with his general character, which, though subtle and penetrating, does not seem to have had any of the dark and gloomy suspicion in its composition which was so remarkable in Richelieu. The cardinal's abhorrence of bloodshed induced him to set his face against the barbarous and absurd habit of duelling, which had arrived at such a fearful pitch in France ; and one of the first edicts which the young king presented to the parliament for verification on attaining his majority was levelled at that monstrous and idiotical practice. But the very same feelings which induced the minister to labour for its suppression, prevented him from employing those severe means which Richelieu, Gustavus Adolphus, and other men of determined and resolute character had found to be effectual. His edicts thus lost almost all their effect; mitigations and evasions were constantly admitted, and the most effectual plan adopted for stopping duels was that proposed by the Prince de Conti, who co-operated assiduously

with Mazarin in this respect, and who, in holding the states of Languedoc, obtained from all the deputies returned a positive engagement to receive no challenge whatsoever, and to labour with all their friends and relations in order to extort from them a promise of the same kind.

It must not be supposed, however, that in other cases Mazarin deprived the law of all force and vigour by the exercise of his somewhat overstrained lenity. On the contrary, he exerted himself with much energy to search out and punish the troops of plunderers and assassins which had fearfully increased and multiplied during the long and sanguinary civil struggle of France.

Several instances which we have given are sufficient to show that the state of the country at that time required very vigorous efforts on the part of all persons connected with the police of the realm, in order to discover and bring to justice the multitude of offenders with which every city and every high-road swarmed: but the memoirs of Gourville, Artagnan, Bussy, and others, display a degree of apathy, through all classes of the people, to the absolute necessity of a strict and well-regulated police, that affords the strongest proof of the lamentable state in which it remained. The comedies of Molière offer, in too many instances, true pictures of the times in which the great comic poet lived. The revelry of Don Juan was accompanied by the rogueries of Scapin and the hypocrisy of

Tartuffe ; and crimes and follies of a deeper character,—the breach of all private faith, the invasion of all domestic sanctities, the cup of the poisoner, and the knife of the assassin,—are as rife in the authentic memoirs of those days as in the wildest imagination of the romance-writer. To the darker crimes of this sort no mercy was shown by the minister ; while, by softening the people, and introducing refined and elegant arts, he mollified the passions which gave rise to them. Whether he acted upon a systematic plan, or whether he only followed the impulse of his own private tastes and feelings, certain it is that Mazarin lost no opportunity of taking such measures and promoting such pursuits as were calculated to mitigate the angry passions and polish the manners of the French people. He first introduced the opera into Paris, and laboured hard to give the French a taste for fine music. Even before the civil war, his library had been magnificent, and his collection of pictures and statues extremely valuable ; and after he returned from exile triumphant over his enemies, he pushed his taste for all that is splendid and beautiful to a degree of ostentation and luxury which spread as an example rapidly through all parts of the Parisian world, producing its natural consequences upon the minds of all classes.

Rude suppers in the open gardens round the city, at which often swords were drawn and blood was spilt, were no longer the mode in France ; but the

splendid festivals and devices which had given so much pleasure to the Cardinal de Richelieu, now ameliorated and purified by a more refined taste, became common not only in the palace of the king, but in the houses of the high nobility.

Under the care of Mazarin instrumental music also first began to be generally cultivated in France; and, instead of four-and-twenty violins, which shortly before formed the whole orchestra of the King of France, various instruments were introduced and taught to take a part in the works of composers brought from Italy. At the same time, dancing was cultivated and became almost a science. Ballets were performed, in which the young king himself bore a conspicuous part, and constant balls enlivened the court, and brought together in scenes of festivity and amusement those persons who on former occasions would have met for purposes of intrigue, of faction, or of violence. The lead in every sort of splendour and refinement was taken by Mazarin himself; he left to the young king, and the youthful courtiers who surrounded him, those carousels and mock-fights, and runnings at the ring, which afforded the only means that remained of displaying the splendour and the address of chivalrous times, without the perils or the inconveniences; but in festivals, in balls, in ballets, in all, in short, that required taste alone, and the graces of an accomplished mind softened by luxurious habits, Mazarin led the court, and, in some cases, dis-

played a degree of generosity which but little accorded with his usually avaricious habits. On one occasion, he gave a fête to the court, in the course of which, after a superb banquet whereon all the skill of the most finished cooks of the day had been bestowed, he led his guests through his apartments, decorated with equal richness and taste, to a splendid gallery, in which were exhibited jewels, furniture, rich stuffs, mirrors, tables, cabinets, candelabras, plate, essences, gloves, ribbons, fans, to the value of more than five hundred thousand francs ; and then, after having made the company admire the profusion which reigned around, he distributed tickets, as for a lottery, and caused them to draw for the various articles which were spread out before their eyes. His efforts to refine and polish—or rather, perhaps, the course in which his own tastes led the tastes of the French people—might have a tendency to introduce the softer vices, as no noble principles were instilled at the same time, as virtue was not taught to go hand-in-hand with gentleness, and religion was not used to put a limit to pleasure.

But happy had it been had Mazarin proceeded no farther in the amusements which he introduced or encouraged in France than we have mentioned; for, although there can be no doubt that before his arrival in the country the French were naturally disposed to the wild excitement of the gaming-table, still his example led them forward to excesses

in every species of gambling, which had never been seen before, and which greatly influenced the national character.

The French had just issued out of a long period of excitement, which may be said to have commenced with the wars of the League and ended with the wars of the Fronde,—the human earthquake, which shook down the already ruined edifice of the feudal system. Their course had for several generations been amongst the stronger passions, and now reduced to a state incompatible with the movements of such passions, they required something else to stimulate a people too long accustomed to agitation to sink readily into repose. They wanted yet two or three steps to reach that point in the progress of society which we find them arrived at under the actual reign of Louis XIV. The minister—perhaps, with the design of occupying them, perhaps not—led them towards that point through the excitement of the gaming-table. He himself was an eager and successful gambler, and is reported to have played without much consideration for honour and honesty, either on his own part or others, provided the deceptions employed were skilfully concealed.

The passion for play extended through all ranks and classes : the young king himself was one of the first initiated ; and whenever, under the sharp tutelage in which he was held by Mazarin, he was permitted to have the disposal of any sum,—which was,

indeed, less frequently the case with the monarch of the land than with the son of an opulent merchant,—he carried it at once to the gaming-table, and, either in the apartments of Mazarin himself, or at the house of the Countess de Soissons, spent the evening hours in the most demoralising of vices.*

The prime-minister himself, as we have already said, led the way: the superintendent of finance, the celebrated and magnificent Fouquet, gave up a very great part of his time to the gaming-table; and Hervart the famous financier, with Gourville and others, made daily parties at St. Mandé, or at Fouquet's hotel in Paris, where sums of eighteen thousand or twenty thousand francs were lost in a few minutes, and where jewels of great price, rich lace, and a variety of other objects of the same kind, were staked and won by the company.

On one occasion, in a single deal, Fouquet won back from Gourville sixty thousand livres which he had lost in the commencement of the game; and in another instance, in less than half a quarter-of-an-hour Gourville won from the young Duke de

* Madame de Motteville and La Porte both give frequent instances of the king being without a single crown to give to a wounded soldier when he met one on his way; and this even up to the period of the siege of Dunkirk, when Louis was nearly twenty years of age. For his passion for play we need only refer to the scene given by Gourville at the Hôtel de Soissons, and the well-known anecdote of his gambling all the way down the Garonne as he descended in the royal barge after his marriage, which is told by an eye-witness.

Richelieu fifty-five thousand francs, to pay which sum the duke was obliged to sell one of his estates in Sainctonge. The court, the ministry, the parliament, the citizens, the people, were all affected by the same vice to a lamentable degree; and, of course, if it were Mazarin's intention to corrupt the hearts of the people, and thereby open a door to political corruption if he hoped to render them subservient by the necessities of vice, he succeeded to the utmost extent.

The finances were still in a wretched state, and the condition of the country not in the slightest degree improved, since, a few years before, the people had broken out into revolt upon the imposition of taxes to a very small extent. Compulsion, as we have seen, had then been employed, and employed in vain; but the pleasanter means of corruption now proved more effectual; and, in almost every branch of the government receipts and expenditure, we find the same system going on, tortuous means, tricks, evasions, peculations,—in fact, the whole frame of government presenting nothing but a course of swindling upon a large scale. A few instances, taken from one author alone, of undoubted veracity, will be sufficient to show this in its clearest light.

While the army under the Prince de Conti was in Catalonia, the indefatigable and unscrupulous Gourville was appointed one of the commissioners; and a Monsieur Jaquier, who appears to have been

the principal commissary, *having had need of him, he says, for a great many signatures* in order to put his accounts in proper form, made him a present of fifteen thousand livres, the motives of which liberality need not be more clearly pointed out.

Shortly after, the States of Languedoc were assembled, and Mazarin demanded from them a grant of one million five hundred thousand livres. The province was poor and exhausted, and the States, but especially the clergy, remonstrated vehemently, declaring that their congregations would be utterly ruined. It was immediately suggested to Mazarin that fright might do more with the province than persuasion; and, a few days after, a packet arrived for the governor, announcing that the army of Catalonia was to take up its winter-quarters in Languedoc, and giving directions respecting all the arrangements for distributing the troops through the province.

The States immediately, in imagination, beheld themselves eaten up by the soldiery, and a very brief calculation showed that the contributions which would be exacted from them for the support of the army would amount to ten times the sum demanded by the cardinal. At the same time, it was adroitly insinuated to the principal members that there might be means of changing the destination of the army. Sixteen hundred thousand francs were immediately voted, and the forces from Catalonia were quartered in Guienne, as had, in fact, been intended throughout..

From time to time, however, the edicts affecting the public contributions to the State, if not carried through the parliament in the immediate presence of the king, met with considerable opposition ; and, as force was now unnecessary and not in fashion, Gourville suggested to Fouquet that it might be expedient to bribe the leaders of the opposition. Two thousand crowns smoothed the spirit of the President de Coigneux, other applications of the same kind were made to the irritable consciences of the rest, and the parliamentary Cerberus, lulled by the sops of the superintendent, suffered the edicts to pass with nothing more than a low growl.

Such, then, was the state into which France rapidly fell after the conclusion of the civil war. Luxury of the highest description reigned in the court, in the city, and in the camp ; except, indeed, where some nobler and incorruptible spirit maintained its former simplicity, and yielded nothing to the softening influence of the lassitude into which France had fallen after the feverish paroxysm of the Fronde had passed. Thus, at the siege of Arras, while the Marquis d'Humières was served on splendid silver with all the same delicacy and luxury which reigned in Paris, Turenne, the commander-in-chief, employed nothing but tin at his table ; and though he kept a hospitable board to which a number of officers were daily invited, the only food set before them consisted of large joints of meat, hams, ox tongues, sausages, and good wine.

Corruption, in short, reigned in every part of the administration, and had its effects upon the hearts of all. Mazarin sought nothing for himself but the accumulation of riches—the last sordid passion of decaying humanity—and for that purpose he plundered* and he gamed.

Fouquet, with a somewhat more generous mind, devoted himself to the selfishness of profusion and ostentation, and corrupted others for the purpose of obtaining those sums which he lavished, sometimes with a liberal, sometimes with a discriminating, and sometimes with an extravagant spirit, but in which there was no meanness, no avarice. The finances under him, or, rather, under his chief clerk De L'Orme, were farmed out to individuals who purchased from the minister the right of oppressing the people, and whose natural business it was both to extort as much as possible from the king's subjects, and to pay as little as possible to the king himself.

At the same time, every sort of peculation and injustice was of necessity tolerated, inasmuch as the taxes from every different province were mortgaged to men who had made advances already to the State, and who, by refusing any more advances to the bankrupt treasury of the king, could in a moment suspend all the operations of the government, overthrow the superintendent, who supported himself entirely by their assistance, and plunge

* See Bussy, Gourville, Mem. d'Artagnan, &c.

France into all the anarchy and confusion which must ever follow a national bankruptcy. The power of these men was, of course, immense; and as Fouquet, devoting himself to pleasures and amusements, trusted all to De L'Orme, and scarcely even knew what he signed, the clerk, instigated by the brother of the superintendent himself, who was jealous of the influence and wealth at which he had arrived, resolved, if possible, by means of his close connexion with these state money-lenders, to overthrow his principal, and strive for his place. The moment these men refused to supply the superintendent with advances, De L'Orme had every reason to believe that he must fall, and took his measures accordingly. The skill of Gourville, however, intervened to frustrate this treacherous design: he obtained for Fouquet a large loan from the famous Hervart; and thus, having assured himself of the means of going on, the superintendent informed the different agents of finance that he was discontented with De L'Orme, but asked them for no advances whatsoever. This alarmed and surprised them, and beginning to imagine that Fouquet had some means of obtaining resources independent of them and of De L'Orme, they believed it would be politic to pay their court, as heretofore, to Fouquet rather than to his clerk. They abandoned De L'Orme to his fate, and pressed forward to offer the superintendent their assistance; so that he was soon in

a condition to dismiss his faithless secretary, without danger to himself.

The greatest peril, however, which the superintendent ran, was from the avaricious jealousy of Mazarin himself, combined with the deadly hatred of one opposed to himself in every feeling and in every principle. That one, indeed, was as yet without any ostensible power; but whatever power he did possess, it is evident, he employed to the utmost against the superintendent. I allude to the famous Jean-Baptiste Colbert, the son of a small landowner in Champagne, who, by a remote connexion with the secretary of state Le Tellier, had been introduced to Mazarin, and had served that minister faithfully at the end of the civil war. He had been first employed as a sort of secretary by the cardinal; but his great talents and genius, especially for finance, were soon discovered by the minister, who raised him step by step, still keeping him near his person, and employing him in the regulation of those branches of the revenue which, either on private or on public grounds, he had separated from the functions of Fouquet, and brought under his own immediate department.

Towards the period at which this history is now arrived, Colbert certainly exerted himself greatly to ruin Fouquet; and his efforts with Mazarin were not in vain, though the danger of overthrowing the superintendent or of embarrassing his proceedings,

at a moment when the finances were in such a critical situation, served Fouquet much more with Mazarin than any regard which existed between them, and induced the minister to leave the superintendant unmolested in the execution of his office.

We shall have occasion to trace the enmity of Colbert and Fouquet at an after period ; it is sufficient here to say, that the coldness and disapprobation of Mazarin more than once manifested itself in such a manner as to induce the superintendant to believe his ruin determined, and to cause him to form vague schemes for resisting the power of the Cardinal—schemes certainly treasonable and wrong, but not of the character which was afterwards given to them.

After the return of the court from Dunkirk, a great and important consideration forced itself upon the minister, and led him forward to those negotiations which may be looked upon as the grand diplomatic transaction of his career. Louis XIV. had now arrived at that period of life when it was absolutely necessary to find for him some suitable alliance. Many difficulties, however, existed regarding the choice of a bride for the young monarch of France. Marie de Mancini, though according to all accounts positively ugly, had succeeded her fairer sister Olympia in the affections of the young king. Bold, decided, talented, not without grace or wit, the means she had employed to captivate the heart of Louis consisted alone in the open display of that

deep attachment towards him which at once flattered his vanity and excited more generous and tender feelings at the same time. She followed him wherever he went, her eyes were constantly upon him ; she seemed to forget the presence of a court, and the necessity of any restraint but that of virtue ; her face gained expression, her eyes fire, her person even a degree of beauty, under the influence of the strong and overpowering passion which had taken possession of her ; and Louis attached himself to her in return with a degree of ardour and devotion far superior to that which he had formerly displayed towards her sister.

The Queen beheld the conduct of Marie de Mancini with disgust and apprehension. At first, indeed, she believed the love of the King to be an idle passion which would soon pass away, and the carelessness which had succeeded to his first attentions towards Olympia Mancini gave good grounds for such a belief ; but the mother's foresight soon penetrated into the bosom of her son, and day by day she felt more anxious in regard to his designs. The feelings of Mazarin, of course, were different. It can scarcely be doubted that at times emotions of pride and dreams of ambition must have arisen in his mind from the sight of the king's passion for his niece ; but considerations of his own best policy, as well as a sincere purpose of effecting what was best for France itself, there can be equally no doubt, soon overbore in his mind any

desire of placing his young relation on the throne of France. Whether he ever did hint to the queen a fear, a suspicion, a belief that Louis entertained some designs of raising Marie Mancini to his bed, I cannot tell. But that he ever mentioned the circumstance to the Queen, as if seeking her approbation of that purpose, and that she replied, “ If he should dishonour himself so far, I would take my second son by the hand and put myself at the head of all France against him and against you,” I believe to be as idle a fable as ever dropped from the pen of a fabricator of anecdotes.

Madame de Motteville clearly states that Anne of Austria displayed a great distaste for Marie de Mancini; but she also asserts, that Mazarin, however he might be tempted, never seriously made any effort to ally either of his nieces to the king ; “ being too prudent,” she says, “ to undertake to put one of them upon the throne.”

There can be no doubt that Louis himself would willingly have given his hand to Marie de Mancini ; but his mother, who retained great influence over him, marked her opposition to such a proceeding most strongly; and Mazarin was not long in co-operating with Anne of Austria as vigorously as she could desire. All ideas of the kind being put aside, the eyes of the whole court were turned to seek amongst the daughters of the sovereigns of Europe a princess worthy of the hand of Louis XIV. The one upon whom both Mazarin and the Queen at

once fixed was, of course, the most difficult to be obtained. Various considerations prevented either from thinking of any of the daughters of the Duke of Orleans. The Princess Henrietta of England, to whom the Queen was at that time very much attached, was young and timid, and had by no means gained the regard of her cousin the young King of France. A princess of Portugal was proposed; but Mazarin saw in any connexion with the house of Braganza a long continuance of the war with Spain, and he would not listen to such an idea for a moment.

The Princess Margaret, daughter of the Duke of Savoy, related by the nearest ties to the monarch of France, was also connected with Mazarin, by the marriage of her cousin the Count de Soissons with one of the cardinal's nieces; and the suggestion made by that princess's mother of an alliance between her daughter and the young king was in no degree displeasing to the minister. The connexion offered several advantages both to France and to Mazarin, but nevertheless he only employed the negotiations which took place upon the subject as a means to obtain a more important object, still reserving the alliance with Savoy as the next best resource if his endeavours with regard to Spain should once more be frustrated.

We have seen that in 1656 he had eagerly sought to obtain for Louis XIV. the hand of the Infanta Maria Theresa; and though both before that

period and after the negotiations of Lionne were broken off, proposals and suggestions were continually passing between the French and Spanish courts, in which the hand of the Infanta was spoken of frequently as the price of peace between the countries, for a time two great obstacles prevented anything like an agreement upon the subject. The first of these was, that the princess was the apparent heiress of the Spanish throne, and the house of Austria, as well as the rest of Europe, viewed with apprehension the possibility of the crowns of France and Spain being united on the same head : the second was the alliance between Spain and the Prince de Condé, with the determination of Mazarin, on the one part, not to restore the prince to his offices and dignities, and the resolution of Spain, on the other part, to support him in all his claims to the very utmost. The first of these difficulties, however, was now removed : Philip IV. had re-married shortly after his first wife's death, and other heirs appeared to the Spanish throne.

The victories of Turenne, the ill success of the Spanish arms in all quarters, the exhaustion of the **finances** of Spain, and the clamours of her people for peace, all tended to make the demands of Philip and his minister much more moderate than they had been, and to give a reasonable prospect to France of ultimately obtaining the hand of the Infanta. Anne of Austria desired such an event most ardently ; Mazarin undoubtedly sought it, and saw

therein not only a glorious consummation of all the French successes, but also the probable origin of claims and advantages to be urged at an after period which would afford a degree of power and influence to France far superior to any that she had yet attained.

Spain, however, still hesitated : Mazarin knew that to advance towards her would make her immediately draw back, and that concessions upon his part would increase demands upon that of Don Louis de Haro, and he consequently determined to give a favourable reception to the proposals of the Duchess of Savoy, to avoid binding himself by any engagement towards her, but to spread abroad a report that the King was about to marry the Princess Margaret, and to hold a public and ostentatious meeting of the two courts in the city of Lyons.

Tidings of such events, he knew, would speedily reach Madrid ; he trusted that Don Louis de Haro would perceive the risk of farther hesitation, and that Spain, absolutely requiring peace, would at once offer the Infanta as the price thereof. Nor was he in any degree mistaken. Difficulties indeed existed both with Anne of Austria and with Louis ; for it was absolutely necessary that they should make up their mind to the alliance of Savoy if the minister's views upon Spain proved unsuccessful.

The inclinations of the young King had appeared in his having declared that he would have none but

a handsome wife; and Anne of Austria, whose eye was turned towards the Princess of England in case she could not obtain the Infanta for her son, was extremely ill-disposed to the marriage with Margaret. That princess, indeed, was proverbially plain, and the Duke of Bavaria had on that account alone rejected her hand when offered, and had preferred her younger sister Anne.

Madame de Motteville suspects that Mazarin eagerly desired that the proposed marriage with Marguerite should take place; but, at all events, the reason which he assigned to Louis and the Queen for meeting the court of Savoy at Lyons was, that “in order to force the King of Spain to speak, it was necessary to show him publicly that the King was about to marry elsewhere.”

Accordingly, while Turenne still pursued his successes against the Spaniards in the Low Countries, the court of France set out from Paris on the 25th of October, and proceeded by extremely slow and ostentatious journeys towards Lyons. The Queen-mother, indeed, had shown great reluctance to go; but she was persuaded to accompany her son at the last moment, and the departure was put off for fifteen days, in order, it was given out, to allow time for her preparations; but through all these delays, and through the tardiness of the march to Lyons, which all together occupied twenty-eight days, there may perhaps be seen a political motive. It was necessary that full tidings of all the pro-

ceedings of the French court should reach Madrid; and the whole matter was so nicely balanced, that without the fifteen days, during which the preparations of the Queen delayed the journey, the King of France would have been pledged to the Princess of Savoy without the Spaniards having time to interfere.

The French court arrived at Lyons on the 23rd of November, and that of Savoy five days after. The Queen, the young King, and all the principal personages in Lyons went out to meet the Duchess of Savoy and her daughter; and Louis, riding forward, saluted them, and returned to his mother, seeming agreeably surprised to find the Princess Marguerite much handsomer than she had been represented. On further acquaintance, he found her also agreeable and talented; and the Duchess of Savoy, though she somewhat went beyond the bounds of delicacy in courting the Queen of France and her minister, found everything proceeding as she could wish for the aggrandisement of her daughter.

Even while she flattered herself that it was most secure, however, the blow was struck which overthrew her schemes. As soon as the news reached Madrid, that Louis was about to marry the Princess of Savoy, and was upon his way to meet the Savoyard court at Lyons, the King of Spain, who had always counted upon obtaining peace when he liked in return for his daughter's hand, exclaimed, "That cannot be! that shall not be!" and after

a brief consultation between the monarch and Don Louis de Haro, that minister's agent, Antonio Pimentel, was despatched to meet the French court at Lyons, and, throwing off all concealment, to offer the hand of Maria Theresa. So eager was the Spanish court, that Pimentel set out without passports at the risk of being arrested in every town; but he had resolved, it would seem, if made a prisoner, to demand to be carried immediately to Mazarin, and thus insure the delivery of his important message. He was so well disguised, however, and conducted his journey so prudently, that he passed uninterrupted, and arrived in Lyons on the very same evening that the court of Savoy made its entrance. He was known, we are told, to Colbert, who had accompanied Mazarin on his journey, and to him Pimentel immediately communicated his arrival, together with such information regarding his object as might stay any proceedings on the part of France in the alliance with Savoy. Colbert immediately communicated the fact to Mazarin, and that minister held a long interview with Pimentel on the following morning.

In the mean while, however, the impetuosity of Louis, and his eager desire to enter into the marriage state, had nearly rendered the arrival of the Spanish envoy of no effect. He was struck from the first to find Marguerite so much handsomer than he had expected: he found her more and more

agreeable every moment ; her figure was remarkably good, her demeanour full of royal ease : and when Anne of Austria, who was in every respect averse to the marriage, remonstrated with her son on the decided part he was acting towards the princess, he forgot the docility he had so long shown, assumed for a moment the tone of the monarch, and made such a reply as to bring tears into the eyes of the queen.

Marguerite, herself, perhaps now entertained hopes. She had steadily opposed the journey to Lyons ; she was conscious of her want of beauty, and she had seen that the interview between the courts of France and Savoy was very likely to end in a new slight to herself. She had accordingly done everything in her power to avoid accompanying her mother, and had even feigned sickness to impede a transaction which she thought degrading. Her will had been overruled ; but now the sudden affection with which Louis seemed to regard her must have been flattering to her feelings, if not to her hopes. She maintained the same equable demeanour, however, holding herself proudly even in the midst of the court of France, and thereby did not conciliate the regard of the queen-mother. Anne of Austria sought to induce Mazarin to interfere during the course of the evening, in order to prevent the young king from absolutely committing himself ; but whether the minister was already aware of the proposals of Spain, or suffered the private inducements which biassed him towards the alliance

with Savoy to overbear in his mind the considerations of policy, he treated the request of the queen, his benefactress, with a degree of ungrateful coolness which greatly affected and hurt her.

If the minister refused to interfere at the entreaties of the queen, there was another person who interposed effectually on her own account. This was Marie de Mancini, who not only felt, but ventured to express, the keenest jealousy at the testimonies of regard which Louis showered upon the Princess of Savoy. Her dominion was so powerful, that Louis not only listened to her bitter reproaches, but immediately altered his conduct towards the princess; and on the following day a great change was apparent in his demeanour towards Marguerite of Savoy.

In the mean time, Mazarin had conferred with Pimentel, and had obtained from him such information as showed him that the proposals of Spain, concerning peace and the marriage of the infanta with the young king, were sincere and likely to be final. Having convinced himself of this, he proceeded to the apartments of Anne of Austria, and found her gloomily pondering over the proposed alliance with Savoy. “I bring you good news, madam,” he exclaimed with a joyful air. “What is it?” demanded the queen; “can it be peace?” “Far more, madam,” replied Mazarin, “I bring your majesty both peace and the Infanta.”

The joy that Anne of Austria felt can hardly be

expressed. To see her niece married to her son, and by that union to restore peace to Europe, had long been one of her first aspirations : nor can we doubt that Mazarin himself was highly gratified at the turn which affairs had taken. The satisfaction with which he announced it to the queen, the distinct view of his policy which he had given to her before, but which Anne of Austria would not or could not see, and the remarkable words which he employed on another occasion, but with reference to the same fact, declaring that, whatever renunciation to the contingent succession of her father the infanta might make, France could not lose her claim to that succession if she gave her hand to the young king, all prove that Mazarin's view of the policy he was pursuing was clear and definite ; and that, if the inclinations of the man made him waver, as has been asserted, the judgment of the politician was never at fault for a moment.

The difficult task remained of breaking the intelligence to the Duchess of Savoy ; for with Louis himself no difficulty whatever was found. He saw at once the infinite advantages to himself and to his realm which the alliance with Spain would procure : the portrait which had been drawn for him of the Infanta represented her as far more beautiful than Margaret of Savoy ; and he was well contented even that his marriage should be delayed, for the great objects that were to be gained.

Mazarin and the Queen applied themselves to soothe and console the Duchess of Savoy for her disappointment, and represented to her the very great inducements which rendered it imperative upon the court of France to prefer the alliance with Spain. The Duchess could not deny the force of their reasonings; but she represented her own claims so strongly, that they agreed to give her, in writing, a promise to complete the proposed marriage between Louis and the Princess Margaret, in case any unexpected obstacles should prevent the alliance with Spain. This was politic, even upon the part of Mazarin; for Savoy had no means of impeding the negotiations between France and Spain, and the knowledge of the French monarch's absolute engagement with the court of Savoy was quite sufficient to urge forward the Spanish King to conclude the treaty definitively if he really desired the marriage. The Princess Margaret herself played the painful part which she had to perform with a calm dignity which excited admiration in all; and after some time spent in empty fêtes and entertainments, the two courts separated, and the royal family of France returned to Paris, which city they reached in the end of January 1659.

Although Don Antonio Pimentel had not brought with him full powers to treat, he had been ordered to sketch out with the ministers of France the outlines of a general treaty of peace between the two countries. He did not, it is true, nego-

tiate with Mazarin in person ; but he carried on with the inferior ministers a long train of conferences in which the foundations were laid for the famous treaty of the Pyrenees. It would be tedious to inquire in this place into all the minute particulars of the transactions which took place between the envoy of Spain and the ministers of France, previous to the signature of the preliminary treaty of Paris which took place on the 8th of June. A general armistice had been proclaimed on the 8th of May, which was of course a necessary step to be taken in the first instance. Two things, however, are evident : that Pimentel was hasty in signing a treaty of such importance, even as a preliminary ; and that the treaty itself left a thousand questions undetermined which afforded to either country at any time the means of evading its stipulations. The points in this treaty which were seen with the greatest disapprobation by the court of Madrid, were the total neglect of the interests of the Prince de Condé, and the compromise, in many respects, of the dignity of the Spanish crown. Spain, therefore, on the one part, and France on the other, reserved for their prime ministers the task of completing that which had been thus imperfectly and unsatisfactorily begun ; and it was agreed that Mazarin and Don Louis de Haro should draw near to the frontier, and frame in person a definitive treaty between the two countries. Previous to their meeting, however, an arrangement was to be made in the

domestic affairs of Louis which was equally painful to him and to Mazarin.

The love of Marie de Mancini for the young monarch had become too apparent for Mazarin to suffer his niece to remain any longer in the immediate proximity of the king without risking the reputation of the girl herself, and bringing disorder and confusion into the royal family. After the return of the court to Paris, Marie de Mancini had resumed her whole influence over Louis's mind. She followed him everywhere, she never suffered him to enter the presence of his mother without her ; and Anne of Austria's hatred towards her became so great, that daily disputes on the subject took place between the Queen and her son. The passion of Marie too was so violent, that the minister might entertain apprehensions lest her virtue should yield to temptation.

It would seem that when the proposal of removing her from court was first made, the grief of the young lady was so excessive, that the King, touched by her sorrow, proposed to the cardinal himself to break off the treaty of marriage with the Infanta, and set his niece upon the throne. Whether actuated by policy or good feeling—whether thinking the negotiations with Spain too far advanced, or only considering the welfare of France, Mazarin made the following noble reply: “ Having been chosen by the late king your father, and since then by the queen your mother, to assist you by my

counsels, and having served you up to this moment with inviolable fidelity, far be it from me to misemploy the knowledge of your weakness which you have given me, and the authority in your dominions which you have bestowed upon me, and suffer you to do a thing so contrary to your dignity ! I am the master of my niece, and I would rather stab her with my own hand than elevate her by so great a treachery.”*

* These words are reported by Madame de Motteville, as well as the anecdote which I have rejected concerning Mazarin’s insinuation to the Queen that the King wished to marry his niece, and the Queen’s reply. It will be seen that as they are both stated to have taken place after the return of the court from Lyons, the two events are perfectly contradictory to each other ; but it may be necessary to give my reason for adopting the one and rejecting the other. That reason is, that the whole of the letters of Mazarin speak the same language and hold the same tone as Madame de Motteville reports him to have used in the latter anecdote, and are totally opposed in every respect to the former one. The whole of those letters, from the beginning to the end, show the most perfect similarity of feeling between himself and the Queen upon the King’s conduct towards Marie de Mancini, and the most perfect harmony of effort and design ; nor is it possible to conceive, after reading them, that one word of difference had ever occurred between the Queen and her minister on that subject. In the course of those letters he twice threatens Louis with quitting France and resigning his post if the King does not cease all communication with his niece ; and in more than one instance he addresses the young monarch in the noblest style of eloquence upon the right which his people had to demand the sacrifice of an idle passion for the welfare of the whole country. Throughout his life we may admire Mazarin as a skilful and highly-talented politician ; but the letters on the passion of the King for his niece show him in a far nobler and more elevated character.

In pursuance of his determination, Mazarin gave orders that his niece should be immediately removed from the court, and placed with her sister at a convent in Brouage ; and on the night before her departure, the Queen withdrew her son from the court and spoke with him long alone. When they returned, it was evident that they had both been weeping : but the mind of Louis was now made up ; he was determined to yield to reason rather than to passion, and though he continued to the last to show the same tenderness towards Marie de Mancini, he suffered her to depart on the 22nd of June. He conducted her himself to the carriage prepared to bear her away without at all attempting to conceal the tears he shed. She made one effort to arm passion against reason at the very last moment : “ You weep,” she said, “ and yet you might command.” Louis, however, resisted both his own passion and hers, and having seen her depart, he set out for Chantilly to bury his grief in solitude.

Not long before this period, Don Juan of Austria, taking advantage of the armistice, passed through Paris incognito in his way to Spain, and had a long interview both with the King and the Queen. Mazarin would willingly have avoided these interviews, seeking as far as possible to induce the court of Spain to believe that he was in no degree anxious for the proposed alliance. Nevertheless, when that minister himself set out for the Pyrenees, the only faults which he appears to have committed throughout the negotiations, proceeded from a certain degree

of impatience to conclude the treaty, which in several instances gave Don Louis de Haro the advantage over him.

Mazarin left Paris at the end of June, and journeying by slow stages towards Bayonne, kept up a constant correspondence with the Queen, the young King, and Michael Le Tellier, the secretary of state, whom he had left to preside over the council in his absence. The court for some time remained either at Paris or Fontainebleau, shorn a good deal of its splendour by the absence of Mazarin, who carried with him a retinue such as might well have done honour to a sovereign prince. Sixty prelates and noblemen of the first rank in France, of whom three were dukes and two were archbishops, accompanied him with all their trains ; and I find it noted, that three hundred persons of his own household, twenty-four mules, eight waggons with six horses each for his baggage, seven coaches, and an immense number of led-horses, together with his guard, consisting of three hundred foot and one hundred horse, formed the caravan which escorted him towards the frontier.

Taking his way by Fontainebleau, he had an interview with the Duke of Orleans at Chambord ; and, passing from castle to castle of the provincial nobility, the progress of the minister was now one continual festival and triumph, contrasting strangely with the former journey, when he had been driven from France with scorn and hatred.

The fatigue of the journey, however, acting upon a frame debilitated by long anxieties and labours, rendered Mazarin ill before he arrived at Bayonne. He proceeded thither, however, and immediately notified his arrival to Don Louis de Haro, who had at the same time approached the frontiers of Spain. The first difficulty that occurred was in regard to the choice of a place for the conferences between the two prime ministers; and the negotiations for that purpose were carried on by Lionne and Pi-mentel, by whom a small island in the Bidassoa, called the Isle of Pheasants, was ultimately chosen. This having been concluded, the two ministers advanced still nearer, the one to Irun, the other to St. Jean de Luz.

A number of preliminary ceremonies, however, were still to be gone through; and although Don Louis, as a sign of his sincerity, caused the Duke of Lorraine, who had been so long imprisoned in Spain, to be set at liberty, he seems skilfully to have divined the impatience of Mazarin and the whole French nation, and to have made use of every quiet delay and phlegmatic obstruction which could irritate the anxious minds of the French and induce them to grant all that he desired to obtain.

At length, however, the conferences commenced on the 13th of August, in a hall appointed for the purpose, in which nobody was permitted to be present but the two ministers and their two secretaries, while the captains of their guards kept the doors

by which they had entered. The conferences then went on rapidly, to the number of twenty-five ; and in them was concluded the famous treaty of the Pyrenees, by which the peace of Europe was secured for the time.

That treaty contained one hundred and twenty-four articles, the principal points determined by which were, the marriage of the young King with the Infanta ; the re-establishment of the Prince de Condé in France, with conditions highly advantageous to himself, and honourable to Spain ; the cession of Roussillon to France, together with a considerable portion of the Low Countries ; the abandonment of all claims on the part of the Spanish King to Alsace and a considerable portion of Artois ; the formal renunciation of the Infanta and her future husband of any right to succeed to her father in any part of his dominions ; and the re-establishment of the Duke of Lorraine in the territories of which he had been stripped by France, with a very slight diminution.

Considerable difficulties and obstacles occurred at every step of the treaty. Mazarin endeavoured as far as possible to withhold from Condé all share of authority or influence in France ; but nothing could shake the firmness of Don Louis on this point, although Condé himself generously besought him not to let his interests interfere to prevent the conclusion of a treaty so desirable to all Europe. The French minister was at length obliged to comply

with some of the demands in favour of the prince, by an intimation that Spain might compensate any loss he sustained by granting him territories in the neighbourhood of France which might be erected into an independent sovereignty in his favour. Mazarin, however, contented himself with gaining something in return for what he granted to Condé, and with not giving him back precisely the same governments which he had before enjoyed ; and in the end a full amnesty and act of oblivion was granted in favour of Condé.

With regard to the renunciation of the future Queen of France, Mazarin also endeavoured to evade as far as possible any very great precision in the terms, although both ministers undoubtedly knew, and the King of Spain himself pronounced the renunciation to be a mere mockery. The terms in which that renunciation was inserted in the contract of marriage are worthy of particular remark, on account of the construction put upon them afterwards. Having promised the Infanta a dowry of five hundred thousand crowns of gold, to be paid by three instalments ; the last of which instalments was to be made fifteen months after the marriage ; the contract goes on to say, “ The most serene Infanta will content herself with the above-mentioned dowry, without hereafter alleging any claim, or making any application or demand upon the pretence that there belonged to her other greater goods, rights, reasons, or claims, on account of the

inheritances or greater successions of their Catholic Majesties, her father and mother, upon any title whatsoever, whether she knew it at the time of her renunciation, or did not know it." The terms of such a renunciation of course opened the way to a thousand cavils, and indeed seemed framed on purpose for misconstruction or evasion: but one thing was decidedly clear therein,—which was, that the renunciation of the Infanta was contingent upon the payment of her dowry in the terms and to the amount specified.

Severe discussions also took place regarding the Duke of Lorraine; but, except in regard to his liberation, very little real and permanent improvement was produced in the situation of that prince by the meeting of the two ministers. The marriage of the Infanta with Louis had been formally agreed upon before; but the death of one of the sons of the King of Spain leaving only one male heir of a feeble constitution between Maria Theresa and the throne, spread consternation amongst the French, by creating a strong impression that this alteration of circumstances would produce an alteration of conduct on the part of the Spanish ministry. Don Louis de Haro, however, had a noble pride in an inviolable adherence to his word, and not the slightest change whatsoever appeared in consequence of the death of the prince.

The difficulties regarding the different places to be ceded by the one country to the other were only

overcome by long and tedious discussions; but a point which would have proved of very great importance, had Mazarin adhered to the spirit of his engagements, was obtained by Spain, in extracting from France a pledge not to interfere any farther in support of Portugal.

Thus, at the conclusion of the treaty, the apparent advantages were much greater upon the part of Spain than upon the part of France. With forces exhausted, so as scarcely to be able to maintain her hold upon any of her remote possessions—with a bankrupt treasury, a country in a state of the greatest decay, a warlike enemy on her Portuguese frontier, and nothing to offer to her former enemy but the hand of the Infanta, Spain obtained from France that peace which was absolutely necessary to her existence—the restitution of a number of strong places, and of considerable tracts of country which the French arms had already taken from her—high and honourable terms for all the revolted subjects of the French crown—a solemn pledge that the King of France should abandon his ally the King of Portugal—the integrity of the absolute kingdom of Spain, and the preservation of even Franche Comté, lying in the very heart of the King of France's dominions.

On the other hand, however, France also obtained great advantages. Though her condition was infinitely better than that of Spain—though her arms were triumphant in every quarter, though the abso-

lute ruin of her adversaries seemed actually in her power; yet her finances were exhausted, her people were discontented at the prolongation of the war; the emperor was willing to break the peace of Munster, and join zealously with Spain; and peace was, in short, but little less necessary to France than to her opponent. She gained then that inestimable blessing;—she retained a reasonable portion of her conquests; she recalled a multitude of her revolted nobles from rebellion without any sacrifice of honour; and with the hand of the Infanta she gained latent and renounced, but none the less revivable and important, claims upon the succession of the Spanish King;—those upon Flanders affording every prospect of being speedily realized; those upon Spain itself being remote and contingent, but probable.

Such were the objects proposed by Mazarin, and such were the objects that he obtained; but there were one or two collateral circumstances connected with the treaty of the Pyrenees not unworthy of notice. The place of conference was surrounded, at a respectful distance, by a number of envoys, princes, and personages, all looking with anxiety to the determinations of the two great ministers on whose will depended the fate of many inferior powers. The chief of these was the unfortunate Charles II, to whom, it was said, Mazarin had on a former occasion refused the hand of his niece while Cromwell was still living. Cromwell was now indeed dead, but his memory itself was awful; and

the deposed monarch was besought by the minister of his cousin not to approach too near, lest the English people should take umbrage at any meeting between him and the French sovereign.

In the neighbourhood of the place of conference, too, was an agent of the Queen of Portugal, who, while Mazarin was signing what seemed to all a pusillanimous abandonment of an ally of France, was receiving a promise of the strongest covert support against Spain, and a permission to enlist troops in the midst of the French court. A variety of curious anecdotes might be related of this meeting, but the detail would be too long, and our account of it must end by the opinions entertained of each other by the two ministers themselves. Mazarin accused Don Louis de Haro of phlegmatic coldness, slowness of comprehension, and tardiness of action. Don Louis, in return, observed that Mazarin had one great fault as a diplomatist,—that of suffering his design to cheat to be constantly apparent.

St. Evremont wrote a severe critique upon the treaty of the Pyrenees, censuring the conduct of Mazarin, and showing that France might have obtained much greater advantages; but he did not show those advantages which France had already obtained, nor those which the almost prophetic foresight of Mazarin perceived that she would obtain, nor the risk and danger which she would have run in endeavouring to obtain more.

While the conferences were still proceeding, but as soon as the favourable termination thereof was ascertained beyond a doubt, the Marshal Duke of Grammont was despatched to Madrid, to demand formally the hand of the Infanta; and he arrived in that capital in the middle of the month of October. As his entrance into the Spanish metropolis was conducted in certainly a very peculiar manner, and bore a strong tinge of that exaggeration which characterised so peculiarly the age of Louis XIV, it may not be unnecessary to give some account of it in this place.

Having made every preparation at Mandez for entering with splendour into the Spanish capital, he judged, to use his own words, that, being despatched by a young and amorous monarch, it would not be right to go into Madrid in any other manner than as a courier, and thought that he was bound to proceed from the gate of the town to the palace at the full gallop. All the post-horses in the neighbourhood were put in requisition, and at Mandez he was joined by a lieutenant and a lieutenant-general of the posts, six master couriers, and eight postilions, with forty horses for forty gentlemen of his suite, which had been sent to him by the Spanish King. He then dressed and arranged his attendants according to his own fancy, and the procession set out in the following order:—First came the lieutenant of the posts, followed by the six master couriers and eight postilions, all

clothed in cassocks of satin *couleur de rose*, with silver embroidery, blowing their horns incessantly : after them came the lieutenant-general, and then the French marshal, covered with a jacket of gold embroidery, and with three white plumes in his hat ; his horse also was clothed in velvet embroidered in gold : six paces behind him came the whole of his suite, all magnificently dressed, and comprising far more than forty persons. In the mean time, the curiosity of the people of Madrid had been excited to the highest pitch, and the whole extent of streets from the gate of the Prado to the royal palace, was lined with carriages on either side, while the balconies, which in the Calle Mayor go up to the fourth story, could not contain the multitudes assembled.

In the order we have mentioned, the procession reached the gates, and then set off at the full gallop amidst the *vivas* of the people ; while the Duke, an excellent horseman, with his hat continually in his hand, kept returning the salutations that he received, notwithstanding the headlong speed at which he went. On arriving at the palace, he entered at once into the vestibule on horseback, and was met at the foot of the staircase by the admiral and constable of Castile, with an immense crowd of grandes, who all seemed highly delighted with the somewhat burlesque exhibition we have described.

The palace was crowded with people, and Gram-

mont could scarcely ascend the stairs, so thickly was it lined by gentlemen and ladies, who pulled him at every step by the *juste-au-corps*, to make him turn round in order that they might see his face. Having forced this difficult path, however, the Duke and his suite were introduced to the King and Queen in separate apartments. He was received with great joy, and a favourable answer to his demand immediately made; and the account which he sent back of the Infanta's personal appearance but served to increase the young King's already somewhat impatient inclination to become a husband.

The ratifications of the treaties of peace between the two crowns of France and Spain could not be effected before the end of February 1660. In the mean time, the court of France had advanced to Toulouse, and was there joined by Mazarin, who was received in the capital of Higher Gascony with all that joy which the successful termination of his pacific mission might well produce in a country so long a prey to wars both foreign and domestic.

During the rest of the winter, the court of France wandered from town to town in the southern provinces, till at length it was announced that the King of Spain was about to set out from Madrid in order to bring his daughter to the frontier; and Louis, with his mother, hastened forward to meet his promised bride. The first ceremonies of the marriage were performed at Fontarabia, where

Don Louis de Haro acted as proxy for the King of France, and in his name espoused the Infanta.

On the 4th of June, the bride was conducted by her father to the Isle of Pheasants, where the conferences for peace had been held; and several interviews took place between the two courts, in the course of which the French officers and noblemen who had accompanied the king, broke through the boundaries that had been placed for them, and mingled freely with the Spaniards. The Spanish courtiers, pleased with the mark of confidence thus displayed, received them cordially and cast off a portion of the Castilian reserve. Peace was solemnly sworn to by the two monarchs, in presence of each other and of all their high nobles; and on the 7th of June 1660, Louis XIV. received his young bride from the hands of her father, after which the courts separated. Two days after, the last ceremonies of the marriage were performed; and it was easy to perceive that Marie de Mancini was forgotten.

The young King and Queen, with the whole assemblage of nobles who had taken a part in the proceedings at St. Jean de Luz, set out immediately, by the way of Bordeaux, for Paris; and in descending the Garonne, from Langon, in a splendid barge provided for the king's use by the city of Bordeaux, Louis amused himself by gaming with the Abbé de Gordes, who in less than an hour lost

fifty thousand crowns,—an expensive species of courtly flattery which is happily at an end.

Louis and his court now betook themselves to Fontainebleau, while preparations were made for the solemn entry of the young monarch and his bride into Paris: but the Queen-mother and Mazarin went on to the capital, and the latter had at length the satisfaction of finding his services to France fully appreciated. The parliament sent deputies to congratulate him on his return, and to thank him for having restored peace to France; and honours were shown to him which no preceding minister had ever received. Sickness, however, came to diminish his joy; and a painful disease not only wore his frame, but even affected his mind so much that when Louis rendered him the last great distinction of going privately to Paris to consult with him, instead of demanding his presence at Vincennes, to which the court had now removed, Mazarin replied, “Sire, you ask counsel of a man who has lost his reason, and who wanders.”

Louis perceived that such was really the case, and, moved by the suffering of one who had served him so long, he retired into a neighbouring gallery and wept. In a short time, however, the minister’s disease assumed a more favourable character, and he seemed restored to temporary health.

In the beginning of September, the King and young Queen made their entrance into Paris with all the splendour of royalty; and Louis displayed

his bride to the eyes of the somewhat turbulent citizens of the capital in a triumphal car richly ornamented, while he himself, on a splendid charger, appeared at the head of all his high nobility, the handsomest amongst them, yielding much in beauty, grace, and majesty to the sovereign whom they followed. Strange was the contrast—most strange indeed—afforded by the appearance of Louis XIV. and his court on that occasion, when compared with its appearance on his entrance into Paris in the year 1652, scarcely nine years before. At the earlier epoch all had been fear, and doubt, and anxiety; and the bold but wise counsels of Turenne had scarcely been sufficient to induce the court to enter the turbulent and discontented capital, while the courtiers who followed, destitute of everything like splendour, came in with rusty arms, and meagre horses, and carriages worn out and ready to fall to pieces. No attendants but those which were absolutely necessary had then followed their lords; and the king, with his train, had borne the appearance of returning from exile and poverty rather than of entering his metropolis after successful exertions against rebels.

Now, on the contrary, with an air of triumph and a feeling of complete mastery, amidst shouts and gratulations and acclamations of all kinds, with pomp and splendour, and parade around, clothed in a habit of gold and silver embroidery, and mounted, as we have said, on a superb charger,

which displayed his fine person to the eyes of all his people, Louis may be said to have commenced on this day that reign of pompous magnificence which lasted in its different phases for more than fifty years.

The Queen-mother, the widowed Queen of England, and the graceful but vain and unhappy Henrietta her daughter, appeared at the balcony of the Abbé d'Aumont in the Rue St. Antoine, and while they gazed upon the pageant that passed below, added not a little themselves to the splendour and interest of the scene. But, of all things, that in which the extraordinary change that had taken place within ten years was most apparent, was in the situation of the Cardinal Mazarin himself. The hated, proscribed, persecuted minister, had on the former occasion been still in exile, and some had believed, and many had affected to believe, that his banishment was to be for ever. Now, however, he entered loaded with honours and authority, flattered by the courtiers, admired and wondered at by the people, and followed by a train such as probably attended no prince in Europe but the monarch in whose name he ruled. His household alone was more than an hour in passing ; and, in order to show the state of a French prime-minister, we cannot do better in this place than give an account of its appearance as detailed by one who at that time looked on with eyes of wonder and admiration at the magnificence of a court which

she was destined at an after-period to rule, and on the graces of a monarch whose bride she was ultimately to become.

“The household of Cardinal Mazarin,” says Madame de Maintenon in a letter to the Marchioness of Villarceaux, “was not that which was the ugliest. It began by seventy-two baggage-mules, of which the twenty-four first had housings, simple enough; the others had more beautiful, finer, and more brilliant housings than the finest tapestries that you have ever seen. The last were of red velvet with gold and silver embroidery, and silver bits and bells, all of a degree of magnificence which caused great exclamations. Then passed twenty-four pages, and all the gentlemen and officers of his household: after that, twelve carriages with six horses each, and his guards. In short, his household was more than an hour in passing and in being admired. That of Monsieur came after. I forgot, in that of the Cardinal, twenty-four led-horses covered with housings so beautiful, and so beautiful themselves, that I could not take my eyes off them. The household of Monsieur then appeared most pitiable; and they say this was done by design, in order to display the excessive opulence of the Cardinal. The Count d’Estrées called it an ostentatious simplicity.”

Thus wrote Madame de Maintenon, only known at that time as the poor Madame Scarron. She goes on to describe the magnificence of the household of

the King, into the details of which it may be unnecessary to enter. Indeed, all the spectators of that famous entrance seem to have suspended their admiration of the magnificence of the court, in order to give way to their wonder at the wealth and splendour of Mazarin. The simple La Fontaine himself appears to have been principally occupied by the household of the minister, and especially of his mules, of which he says, comparing them with the horses,

“Figurez-vous, que dans la France,
Il n'en est point de plus haut prix ;
Que l'un bondit, que l'autre danse,
Et que cela n'est rien au prix
Des Mulets de Son Eminence.”

The citizens of Paris who came out to view the procession rivalled in splendour of appearance the court of the monarch; and we are told that there were more than ten thousand people on foot covered with cloth of gold. But that which seems to have attracted the greatest attention, with the exception of the household of the Cardinal, was the personal appearance of the young King himself. La Fontaine cannot find similes sufficient to express his beauty, his grace, and his majesty. Madame de Motteville dwells upon the same subject. Racine declares, in verses undoubtedly applicable to Louis,

“Howe'er obscure his birth, the world had known
Its master at first sight.”

and Madame Scarron tells her correspondent, that

the Queen must have retired that night well contented with the husband she had chosen.

The admiration of the populace of Paris, always easily excited by grace and beauty, was raised to the highest pitch by the dignity of demeanour and magnificent presence of the King. He was received with that applause and enthusiasm on the part of his subjects which was destined to follow his footsteps through life; and, elevated by the gratulations of his people, and by the consciousness of great energies, Louis, perhaps, might look towards the minister to whom he had trusted all his power, and whose train at that very moment nearly equalled that of the sovereign, and might long to assume the exercise of that authority which he felt himself capable of exercising well. With generous forbearance, however, he resisted the temptation to take back even that which was his own, and left to Mazarin, out of gratitude, till the last day of the minister's life, the power which had been employed so skilfully.

All now tended, however, to render the task of ruling an easy one to Mazarin. Peace was fully restored; Spain was allied to France by the nearest ties; the empire submitted with a good grace; Holland, though perhaps not well pleased with much that had passed, maintained a tranquil aspect; Italy perforce was quiet; all hostilities were at an end between Sweden, Denmark, and Holland; and Charles II. had been reinstated in the domi-

nions of his ancestors by the immortal Duke of Albermarle. Nor were the character of the British monarch and the tone of his court at all likely to disturb the general pacification of Europe.

Charles II. carried from the Continent to Great Britain the peculiar tone of the times of the Fronde, and it was adopted by his whole court, many of the members of which had personal opportunities of learning their lesson in the French capital. I do not, of course, speak here of the spirit of opposition to the government, which, in fact, was but one of the subordinate parts in the motives of the Fronde. In the one country had raged a civil war, in the other reigned a supreme peace: but the utter licentiousness of manners — the total disregard of honesty, consistency, or honour — the infraction of all ties, moral and religious — the witty levity and jocular selfishness which had characterised the Fronde, were assuredly carried to England by Charles II.: the plots of Oates and of Joly, the poisonings and the duels of London and Paris, the Achitophel and the De Retz, the gambling, the harlotry, the subornation, the luxury, the treason of the two capitals, all offered striking points of resemblance; and after the Duchess of Longueville had, from a window in the Place Royale, witnessed the combat between her lover Coligni and the Duke of Guise, the Countess of Shrewsbury, disguised as a page, held the horse of Buckingham while he killed her husband in a duel. No coun-

try in such a state could undertake any very great or dangerous enterprises against so powerful a monarchy as France.

In regard to the internal state of Louis's dominions, all too was favourable. The country was certainly much exhausted by long contentions, the finances in a state of terrible disorder; but the people were calm and joyful through hope—faction had been crushed effectually, and its leaders were completely humbled. Gaston, the weak, turbulent, and faithless Duke of Orleans, was dead; De Retz wandered a hopeless exile, in poverty, neglect, and despised debauchery; Beaufort had submitted, not without dignity, but with sincerity; and Condé had learned from the first aspect of Louis Quatorze that the time for revolt was over. Mazarin had no efforts then before him, to occupy the few short years which was all that even hope could hold out to his sight, but to regulate the finances of the country as far as was possible, to provide for the young king ministers in whom he could trust, and to instruct him himself in the task of governing.

The education of the young king had been terribly neglected till he reached the age of eighteen or nineteen. All manly accomplishments, all military sciences, had been indeed communicated to him zealously; he knew, it would appear, something of history, but not much; his knowledge of the learned languages, if he possessed any, was

excessively limited ; he had learned Italian for love of the Mancinis, and Spanish when he was about to marry the Infanta ; but from the more important science of government he had been cautiously withheld.

Mazarin, however, it would seem, at once perceived the talents and powers of the young king's mind, and the probable brevity of his own remaining life. He declared that there was "the wherewithal in Louis XIV. to make four good kings and one honest man ;" and he applied himself seriously and sedulously to form him for government.

Louis had from past events already obtained impressions which never were effaced ; he had received the lessons of circumstances, and those lessons gave a great increase to the despotic feelings which were probably thickly sown by nature in his bosom. The wars of the Fronde had taught him that to rule with a firm if not a harsh hand was absolutely necessary for the sovereign of a light, volatile, and vehement people : he had seen also, from the evils of careless disorder, the necessity of the most accurate and attentive order in all affairs of state. Of finance Mazarin could afford him no knowledge, for he possessed none himself ; but he placed before his eyes the greatest minister of finance that ever lived, and showed him that he might trust implicitly in Colbert ; and, in his letters from the Pyrenees, he afforded the finest series of

lectures on diplomacy that a statesman could give to a king.

In his efforts to improve the finances Mazarin was by no means successful. The wild and magnificent schemes of Fouquet but served more and more to embarrass the country ; and although Colbert would willingly have snatched the administration of the finances from the lavish hand of the superintendant,* yet Mazarin himself dared not give way to the virulent ardour of that great financier, lest the ruin of one through whose hands the whole revenues of the realm flowed, should, at such a moment of pressure, produce the ruin of the State itself. He knew, however, and appreciated fully the great talent of Colbert ; and he lost no opportunity of opening the way for him to the highest posts.

The chief service, indeed, rendered by Mazarin to Colbert, was by bringing him into intimate connexion with the young king, which he accomplished while engaged in the endeavour hastily to repair, at the end of his life, his long neglect of Louis's education. Mazarin laboured with excessive zeal, after his return from the Pyrenees, to instruct the monarch, who was still his pupil, in every branch of the science of policy ; but, feeling his own deficiency in knowledge of finance, he entrusted the tuition of the king in that respect to Colbert.

* See Gourville, where this fact, which has been disputed, is distinctly asserted from personal knowledge. *

In the latter days of his life, too, he spoke to Louis long and eloquently on the subject of that minister, whose highest post at the time was counsellor of state; and he ended an eulogium such as Mazarin seldom pronounced upon any one by the following remarkable words: "Sire, I owe your majesty everything; but I believe I can repay you in a great degree by giving you Monsieur Colbert."

The actual ministers of the king, however, as they appeared at the death of Mazarin, were Le Tellier, minister at war, Lionne, minister for foreign affairs, and Fouquet, minister of finance. Colbert had no apparent share in the government; but it is clear, at the same time, that Mazarin ere he died had pointed out distinctly to the King the faults and follies of Fouquet, in such terms as, from his knowledge of Louis's character, he doubted not, would sooner or later ruin that minister in the mind of a young and ostentatious monarch. The place left vacant by the removal of Fouquet, which he undoubtedly anticipated, if he did not actually recommend, might probably be filled by Colbert; and to the judgment of the king and the zeal and talents of that minister Mazarin left the task of bringing about the event.

While labouring for the general good of the kingdom in a manner which, had he made the same exertions from the first, would have conferred immortal honour on the name of Mazarin, that minister employed every unoccupied moment in increasing

his own wealth, in grasping at greater authority, and in providing for those who were connected with him by the ties of blood. His own finances, and those branches of the finances of the State which he retained in his own hand, were in the highest state of order, owing to the talents of Colbert, who acted as his intendant. Thus, day by day added to his immense wealth, while the treasury of the king was exhausted; and Fouquet was not ashamed to reply to Louis when he applied to him for money, “Sire, the exchequer is empty; but his Eminence the Cardinal will lend you what you want.”

In regard to power, Mazarin had absorbed nearly the whole authority of the State. Louis, indeed, held his councils, and might be said to transact business with Mazarin; but the minister ruled the will of the king, and it fared ill with those who dared to demand any favour of the monarch without making their applications through the cardinal. From the Queen-mother, Mazarin had long snatched every semblance of authority; so that when she asked anything for herself or for her favourites from the inferior ministers, they boldly replied that they must ask the permission of Mazarin to grant it. She felt the indignity, but smothered her resentment; and, contented to believe that Mazarin was acting in everything for the good of her son, and for the benefit of his dominions, she not only evinced no desire of resisting him,

but also continued to give him her full support, and to promote his private interests as far as lay within her power.

In Mazarin's proceedings in favour of his family, he was not so successful as he had hitherto been ; he reached higher, indeed, but failed to grasp that for which he struggled. Charles II, in adversity and distress, with no prospect before him of re-establishing himself in his own dominions except by the means of foreign armies or foreign influence, had made overtures for the hand of Hortense Mancini, but had been refused by the cardinal, then in the height of his prosperity. Now re-established upon the throne of his fathers, the hand of the King of England was eagerly desired by the cardinal for his niece : he even engaged the widowed Queen of England in his cause ; and, flattering himself that a luxurious monarch scarcely confirmed in the government of a turbulent country would eagerly snatch at any pecuniary resources offered to him, he proposed as the dowry of his niece the immense sum of five million of livres.

The hand of Hortense Mancini, however, was now rejected by the monarch. A marriage was then proposed between Hortense and the Duke of Savoy ; but the Duke was not willing to content himself with gold, and demanded that the strong castle of Pignerol should be given up to him by France. Mazarin could have effected what was required in a moment ; but he replied that he would

marry his nieces with honour or not at all, and that a strong fortress belonging to the country entrusted to his government could form no part of the dowry of his niece. A similar proposal was made by the Duke of Lorraine, and a similar answer was given by the minister.

He was, nevertheless, extremely anxious to see his nieces married before he quitted the world; and, feeling his health failing more and more each day, he cast away all ideas of ambition, and affianced his niece Marie, who by this time had returned to the court, to the constable Colonna, a fortuneless gentleman of Italy, on whom he settled a fortune amounting to a hundred thousand livres per annum in Italy, and a beautiful house which he had bought in Rome. It is not impossible that he thus acted with a view of securing the peace of the royal family of France, as reports were at that time current that the passion of the young king for her he had so devotedly loved, was not so completely extinguished as had been supposed.

The beautiful Hortense he married about the same time to the son of one who had been his firmest friend and support during his stay in France—the Maréchal de Meilleraie—on condition that he took the name of Mazarin. To him he left immense wealth; but, nevertheless, before his death, either remorse from the consciousness of peculation, or a politic intention of securing his riches and the source from which they were derived against

all investigation, induced him to make a donation of everything that he possessed to the king. As he expected, Louis, after having retained the act of donation for a day or two, returned it to the minister, making the whole of Mazarin's wealth in fact his own gift, and, consequently, depriving himself of the power of making any after-inquiry.

It has generally been supposed that the confessor of Mazarin suggested to him various scruples in regard to the wealth he had acquired; and there can be no doubt that, although the cardinal died with the most perfect firmness, he showed, as his end approached, and as that strange and distant country towards which his spirit was travelling fast became more awfully distinct, a much stronger feeling of religion than he had ever displayed before, and fulfilled all the strictest duties of the catholic ritual with a degree of devotion and apparent faith which greatly edified the clergy who surrounded him. His sufferings appear to have been very great, but he bore them with the utmost constancy, seeming to imagine that his prolonged agony might expiate whatever evils he had committed, although he more than once declared in the most solemn manner that he had never done anything in his government of the kingdom of France without the most sincere desires for the good of the State. His last two acts in favour of his family were, to force the princess palatine to resign the superintendance of the

queen's household, in order to bestow her post upon the Countess of Soissons, and to appoint the Princess de Conti, another niece, superintendant of the household of the queen-mother. He provided largely for all the other members of his family, and then prepared to die.

The queen-mother and the young king both did him the honour to visit him; public prayers were put up in Paris for his recovery, in a manner previously only used for members of the royal family; and he himself showed, as we have said, some signs of devotion, though he had never been during life very much distinguished either for piety or for religious hypocrisy. Though he fulfilled all the rites appointed by the Romish church to be used under such circumstances, he appeared to regard the approach of death with no degree of apprehension; and whenever he recovered in any degree, which took place with extraordinary fluctuations from time to time, he applied himself immediately to public business, and generally attempted to conceal from others the state which he did not conceal from himself.

On all occasions of ceremony, when it was necessary to receive strangers, he now made use of a great quantity of paint to hide the ravages of disease. Those ravages, however, were too apparent to be concealed from any person who had ever seen him in a better state of health. One of the foreign ministers having been admitted to his

levee while in this condition, whispered to a friend after gazing on the rouged countenance of the cardinal, "The painting is good for a copy, but it wants the spirit of the original;" and Gourville, who met him five days before his death, carried about in a chair through the park at Vincennes, declares that it was evident that his life was at an end. From him, indeed, Mazarin made no effort to conceal the fact, telling him in plain-terms that he was dying; and at length, after having called the royal family around his bed, and having made each of them a present of some superb jewel, he took a solemn farewell of those with whom he had been so long and so strangely connected—begged them not to visit him again, as his existence would be soon over—called all his domestics and attendants round him, and, sitting in his chair, fully dressed, with his beard neatly trimmed, his red robes on, and his clerical cap upon his head, he asked their pardon for any evil that he might have done them, for any harsh word or violent conduct he might have used, and bade them good-bye for the last time. He occupied himself as long as he could hold the pen in signing despatches; and a few hours before his death, after feeling his own pulse, he exclaimed, judging by the strength which yet remained, "I shall still suffer a good deal!" He died between two and three o'clock in the morning of the 9th of March 1661.

A few hours before his death, his medical attendant informed him that a comet had just appeared : and believing that the physician wished to apply the portent, as it was then considered, to his own exit from the world, he replied, with a contemptuous smile, "The comet does me too much honour." But one of his own acts, performed a few hours before his decease, is perhaps still more characteristic both of the age and of the man. This was, to send the Chevalier de Meré to the chief president, begging him to declare, in his name, to the parliament, that he died its very humble servant. This was the last public act of Mazarin.

The King, there is every reason to believe, regretted him sincerely ; but yet the long rule of Mazarin was beginning to be a burden to him, and the words with which he commented on his death, "I know not what I should have done if he had lived longer," far from being a proof of any want of feeling, would seem to afford strong evidence of the power which his regard for Mazarin had had over him, and a better testimony of esteem than even the tears which he shed at his death.

CHAPTER III.

Inquiry into the progress which Literature, Science, and Art made at the death of Mazarin.

BEFORE we proceed to follow the course of those political events which took place after the death of Cardinal Mazarin, it may be as well to notice, however briefly, the state of science and literature in France during the first twenty years of the reign of Louis XIV. or, in other words, during that period when the personal qualities of the monarch did not influence in any degree the general condition of society in the country which he ruled. The immense and important body of literature which was sent forth to the world from the French empire between the beginning of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is certainly one of the most striking points of contemplation in the epoch known by the name of "the age of Louis the Fourteenth;" and the production of that body of literature has been much too gene-

rally attributed, especially by French writers, to the fostering care of that monarch. On nearer inspection, however, it will be found that the literature of France had taken many of its greatest and most important steps before Louis opened his career as a monarch, and while the sceptre of France, too weighty for a weak sovereign and too unwieldy for a young and inexperienced one, was swayed by the vigorous grasp of Richelieu, or reposed in the calm and skilful hand of Mazarin.

The actual reign of Louis XIV. undoubtedly tended to promote and encourage every species of literature, but he did not by any means call letters forth from darkness: on the contrary, literature had reached a vigorous maturity in France before that monarch took the reins of government into his own hands. He changed its direction, he gave it new objects, he opened for it new paths, he excited it to continual activity; but whether he improved its general character, elevated its views, or really strengthened its operations, is a question which may admit of many doubts.

From the accession of Clovis till the present day, France has never produced anything at all deserving the name of an epic poem; but in another of the high walks of literature much and well-deserved fame has been acquired by the writers of that country. Those efforts of the tragic muse, however, in regard to the pre-eminence of which over

the productions of a later period the French critics themselves entertain great doubts, while no other nation entertains any, were all prior in point of time to the period at which Louis's reign really began. Rotrou, who is considered as the founder of the French tragic school, had appeared at a much earlier period ; and although in the present day nobody will attempt to compare his writings with those of Corneille, yet there are many passages in Venceslas which would do honour to that great poet himself. As a curious example of the low esteem in which the greatest literary efforts were then held, we may mention an anecdote, seemingly well authenticated, from which we learn that the price paid in the first instance by the actors of Paris for the tragedy of Venceslas was no more than twenty pistoles. The success of the play was so great, indeed, that a large sum was afterwards presented to Rotrou ; but the fact of such a sum having been demanded by that poet is in itself remarkable.

Close upon the steps of Rotrou trod the great Corneille. Far surpassing the former as well in purity of style and language as in fire and genius, he may be looked upon as the real parent of the French stage, though he was accustomed to call Rotrou his father. The expression, however, is explained by the fact of Rotrou having constantly and openly expressed his admiration of the “ Cid,”

when the whole power and interest of Richelieu were exerted to obtain from the academy a condemnation of that celebrated work. The superior genius of Corneille was felt and admitted by all men long before the accession of Louis XIV; but it is, and always has been, a very different thing to obtain the respect due to high merit, and that popularity which depends so much upon accident or caprice. For many years Corneille was obliged to struggle nearly alone against the bad taste of the age; and when at length, on the appearance of the "Cid," he won the popular voice also, the Academy went so far as to condemn, under the dictation of Richelieu, various parts of one of Corneille's best works. The injustice which almost uniformly attends contemporary criticism signalised itself by blaming that which after-ages judged most worthy of admiration; and the Academy virtually elevated one of the weakest but most glittering writers of the time over the greatest tragic poet of the age. At length, though more than once thrown back, Corneille won that station for himself which his genius deserved: all that were great in mind and noble in feeling in the land soon learned to admire and feel the works of one who, without any model in his own times, and without any guide but his own genius, created a complete change in the French theatre, and gave elevation and dignity to a stage which had been previously devoted to

what he himself used to call “the trade of saltimbanques.”*

The smaller people, as usual, followed the lead of the great; at one time of his life a place was especially reserved for him in the theatre; and, notwithstanding the contradiction of Voltaire, it is certain that the audience rose to receive him when he appeared. All his most celebrated pieces, however, were composed before Louis XIV. assumed the government of the realm, and the proverb “It is beautiful as the Cid” was common even in the provinces of France long before the death of Mazarin. Thus tragedy had taken its greatest and most dignified steps without the aid or encouragement of the monarch; nor was comedy behind, for Molière had been long in possession of the stage ere Louis began to reign for himself; and the great comic writer scarcely survived that event ten years.

Almost every other branch of literature had also

* The Cid was written in 1637, and so capricious did the great multitude of the French capital show itself towards the works of Corneille, that about the period of the production of his play called Polieucte, in 1643, the well-known La Serre produced a tragedy called “Thomas More,” to which the whole crowd rushed, leaving the benches nearly vacant where the play of Corneille was performed. Several accidents happened in consequence of the pressure to see La Serre’s insipid piece; and that author proposed, half seriously, half jestingly, that the relative merits of Corneille and himself should be decided by the number of door-keepers killed at the representation of their several plays.

not only blossomed, but borne fruit. Lafontaine, the contemporary of Molière, and a man undoubtedly of the most extraordinary genius, lived indeed long and wrote abundantly under the brightest days of a bright epoch; but he had written before that period, and the neglect with which he was treated by the monarch deprives Louis of all claim to the honour of having nourished or fostered his genius.

Boileau too wielded his satirical pen long before the period when Louis first began to encourage the literature of his country; and though the French Horace required the encouragement of an Augustus for the production of his flattering epistles and his "Art of Poetry," many of his immortal satires, which preserve their pungency even when the objects at which they were directed have passed away from memory, date from the very earliest period of Louis's actual reign. He too was preceded by Regnier, in whose old verses are to be found sufficient resemblance to those of Boileau to give point to the accusation of imitation directed against the latter by some of those whom he attacked in his indiscriminate vehemence.

The lighter and the more graceful compositions of such persons as Quinault, whose verses, notwithstanding the eulogium of Voltaire, are now forgotten, were indeed principally, if not entirely, produced under the auspices of a king with whose character and court they were so much

in harmony; but when we look to those instances where Art was only called upon as the handmaid of Genius, we find that many of the great writers classed under those of the age of Louis XIV. owed much to the age, but little to the monarch. All the most vigorous part of the poetical literature of that epoch preceded the death of Mazarin; and though there can be little or no doubt that the prose writers of France acquired a greater command of words — that new weapons were put into the hands of the orator, the preacher, and the moralist, after the refinement introduced by Louis into all things had produced its effect upon the language also, yet the vigorous orations of Omer Talon, the sermons of Bossuet, and many of the petitions, addresses and remonstrances presented by the parliament of Paris to the Queen during the wars of the Fronde, evince that oratory had already taken its spring forward towards perfection, while the immortal Letters of Pascal, published in 1656,* display eloquence of the highest class, unsurpassed by anything that followed.

* Some amongst the many errors committed by Voltaire in his "Siècle de Louis XIV." are of importance, as giving a false view of the progress of society. He thus dates the first appearance of the "Lettres Provinciales," eight years after their publication under the name of Louis de Montalte, and two years after the death of Pascal himself. Bourdaloue also had preached with reputation and success long previous to the period Voltaire assigns, although probably that was his first display of eloquence before the court.

In one of the chief, indeed we may say the most important of all literary efforts, however,—namely, history,—France was not as yet prolific. De Thou had indeed written well, but he had written in the Latin language; and though Pasquier had graced the preceding age, though Mezeray had already composed his History of France, and Ducange was employed on his vast undertakings, yet such writers as Bossuet, Montesquieu, Fleury, Cordemoy, Rollin, and the innumerable multitude of others who employed their pen, their time, and their utmost efforts either in discovering the facts of history hidden under the dust of ages, or in giving to the world those facts in a connected and instructive form, chiefly belong to an after period. To counterbalance this, however, a class of writers, and a kind of writing of a very original and extraordinary character, was totally extinguished in France before the commencement of the reign of Louis XIV. However different in objects and in subject, there is a peculiar character, a humorous simplicity, a clear and intelligent intimacy with the secrets of man's nature, in the writings of such men as Rabelais, Montaigne, Amelot, Marot, Pasquier, Brantome, and others of that school, which were entirely lost before the reign of Louis XIV. commenced, or only flashed forth in a few occasional traits in such works as “*Les Lettres Provinciales*,” and in the satires and epigrams which chequered with merriment the dark and disgusting scenes of the Fronde.

It is not indeed to be doubted that the exertions of Louis XIV. did much for literature, and that his actual reign produced, fostered, and encouraged an immense multitude of men of high talent, many of whom would undoubtedly have exerted their abilities without his support, but many of whom would have been crushed by neglect and poverty, cast back by obstacles and impediments, or retired disgusted from a strife where neither reward nor honour attended victory, had not Louis, with wise liberality, comprehended and acted upon the principle that literary eminence forms no small or insignificant part in the glory of a nation. Nevertheless, as in the history of the progress of society it is necessary to mark distinctly the exact period at which changes take place, lest we should attribute them to wrong causes and thence draw false deductions, it has seemed to me necessary to point out that the literature of France was in anything but a degraded state when Louis took the sceptre into his own hands, and to guard scrupulously against encouraging the mistake which has arisen from the vague and indefinite application of the term, “the age of Louis XIV.”

By this vague application of that term many people have been led to suppose that French literature owed far more to Louis than it really did. Let that honour be assigned to him which is due to him. In fostering and rewarding lite-

rary exertions he did his part as a great and a wise monarch, but no more than his part; and though some of the writers and many of the works which distinguish his reign might have been wanting if he had never lived, the natural course of events would have rendered that literary epoch splendid without him; for though a king may do much to stimulate to exertion by honouring and rewarding the energetic efforts of genius, emulation can do more: the necessity of activity, inherent in genius, will do more still; for great men produce great men, and mighty works beget one another.

Science had by no means made a progress equal to that of literature; and indeed not alone in France, but throughout all Europe, both exact knowledge and the means of arriving at it were but little to be found. The first great steps had been taken, indeed, and in England the immortal Newton was already pursuing the course of his great discoveries at the period of the death of Mazarin; while DesCartes, in France, had some time before given to the world a book which would be quite sufficient to render his name immortal even were all the rest of his works thrown away. I mean his essay on the method of properly conducting human reason in the investigation of truth; a work which more than any other thing, if we except the example and precepts of Lord Bacon, led Science by the hand into the right road, and left her to pursue her course with the certainty of success. Unhappily, Des Cartes, endowed

with a splendid imagination as well as with powerful reason, listened to the most seducing of the two sisters, and quitted the path which he himself had opened for science ; but he left the way marked out for others, and others were not long in following. Mathematicians, indeed, were not wanting at that period in France ; and the famous Pascal, had his bright career not terminated so early as it did, might have lived to overthrow the physics of Des Cartes and take a share in the discoveries of Newton. Nevertheless, up to the period of the death of Mazarin, mathematics had scarcely ever been turned to their legitimate purposes. They had been studied as a science, but had not been employed as a means, and had, indeed, always been abandoned as soon as people approached the very inquiries in which no result was to be obtained without them.

Those pursuits generally denominated the fine arts, had made a greater progress, and in fact were already, in most countries in Europe, verging towards their decline. There had been a feudal architecture and a feudal sculpture, both of them exquisite in their kind, and perfectly harmonious with the manners, customs, thoughts, and feelings of the period during which they existed. Both had fallen with the fall of feudalism ; and the revival of the arts in Italy had cast a far and faint beam upon France, producing nothing indeed of any very great importance either in architecture or in sculpture, but still showing the progress of other tastes and feelings.

France produced no Michael Angelo, no Benvenuto Cellini, no John of Bologna, no Palladio ; but still the massy buildings of the Louvre, constructed under Catharine de Medici, the works of Girardon and Sarrasin, together with several of the churches of that epoch, remain as individual instances of natural genius combating the bad taste always incident to a state of transition. Painting was already in its decline : Rubens had long been dead ; Vandyke was also gone ; Poussin was approaching the period of his death ; and Claude de Lorraine, though still living, had sprung up and become famous long before. Le Sueur was also dead ; and Spain was the only country, perhaps, which at that time could boast of two great living artists—Murillo and Velasquez.

Mazarin, possessed of a natural taste for the arts, had done all that he could to encourage them in France ; but his efforts for that purpose had been continually interrupted by the disturbances of the times, by his frequent exile, and his constant occupation in other matters. Nevertheless, the support which he did give to the fine arts had considerable effect, and, by introducing the best models of all kinds, he greatly contributed to give the French people sufficient taste to appreciate what is good, if not to execute it.

By his care Mignard was brought to the court, and under his patronage obtained very great distinction, both as a portrait-painter and as an artist

of higher pretensions. It is true that his works have since lost not a little of their reputation, and are, perhaps, not valued as they ought to be ; but the two best French painters at that time living—Le Brun and Mignard—met with equal encouragement from Mazarin ; and while the former received high honours, and was appointed chancellor and rector of the academy instituted by that minister, Mignard was employed by every one who pretended either to knowledge of the arts or to favour at the court of France.

Music was yet in its infancy—so much so, indeed, that it scarcely requires notice as amongst the arts existing at that time. Mazarin was fond of it ; Louis himself felt all its power, and did what he could to encourage it ; but it was not till very many years afterwards that the science of harmony was fully appreciated or practised in France ; and the airs of Lulli or Des-touches resemble no more the rich compositions of a Handel, a Haydn, a Mozart, or a Beethoven, than the babbling of a child resembles the eloquence of a finished orator.

At the period, then, when Louis XIV. first grasped with manly power that sceptre which had so long been wielded by others under his name, almost every kind of literature was advancing rapidly, though under circumstances of difficulty : science, yet in its infancy, was struggling forward with tottering steps through tangled and mazy paths, but still striving to cast off the encumbrances

with which it had been loaded in the schools: the fine arts, in general, with the exception of music, were in their decline, but with this difference, that painting and sculpture, after having reached the highest degree of perfection which perhaps those arts can ever obtain, were subsiding gradually towards mediocrity, while architecture, which does not subject itself to the test of representing nature, but whose excellence must always be in a degree estimated by a reference to the age and the country, having been driven from its Gothic forms by the fall of feudalism, was seeking that perfection in some other style which we certainly have not arrived at even yet.

We are necessarily obliged to touch upon this subject lightly; but the great purpose proposed even by this sketch is to ensure that no false appreciation of the results of the reign of Louis XIV. and of his individual acts, should be made by the reader, but that it should be clearly seen what he did and what he did not effect in forwarding the progress of society. In regard to the arts and sciences, the honour of promoting and forwarding was all that he could claim. Whether in other respects he changed the direction of events and altered the course which society was pursuing — whether, in short, his character and qualities as a man and a king had a direct and permanent influence upon his subjects and upon the world in general, may be inquired into hereafter.

CHAPTER IV.

Intrigues to obtain the post of Minister on the death of Mazarin.—Le Tellier.—Fouquet.—Conduct of Louis—of Colbert.—Marriage of the Duke of Aujou and Henrietta.—Libertine amusements of Fontainebleau.—Mademoiselle de la Vallière.—Festivals at Vaux.—Conduct of Fouquet.—Preparations for his ruin.—Enmity of Colbert.—Dissimulation of Louis.—Arrest of Fouquet.—Letter from Louis to his Mother.—Commission appointed to try Fouquet—changed.—Trial of Fouquet.—Baseness of some of his Judges.—His literary friends rise in his defence.—Noble conduct of some of his Judges.—His sentence.—Tyrannical commutation of that sentence into one more severe.—History of his imprisonment and death.—Proceedings against the Partisans.—French and Spanish Ambassadors in London dispute precedence.—Conduct of Louis.—First despatch written with his own hand.

THE death of Mazarin had been so long anticipated, that intrigues for giving him a successor had been already formed by the various persons of the court who were likely to possess any influence. The only two candidates for the vacant office, however, whose chances of success were great, were Le Tellier and the famous superintendent Fouquet. The former was versed in all the business of the realm; the latter possessed vast influence from his command over the finances of the country. The hopes of the superintendent, however, were still more excited by the degree of favour in which he seemed to stand with the young king, who, notwithstanding the warnings which Mazarin had given him in regard to the depredations of Fouquet, was struck

with the engaging manners of that minister, and found even in his prodigal ostentation something assimilating with the love of false splendour in his own character.

Anne of Austria, even before the death of Mazarin, had notified to some of her confidential friends her determination of resisting the progress of Fouquet in favour of the king, pronouncing him to be a great robber, and declaring that she believed he would still obtain the ascendancy over his companions. In Le Tellier she expressed great confidence, and displayed much hatred towards Lionne, whom she proposed, if possible, to drive from the ministry; but it would seem that her thoughts turned principally to Marshal Villeroy as the most honest amongst the courtiers of the day, and the person best fitted to fill the office of prime minister, although she could not but acknowledge that his abilities were scarcely adequate to the station. She declared, indeed, beforehand that she believed the king would be well pleased to amuse himself with the government of his kingdom; but she does not seem at all to have imagined that he would follow the advice given to him by Mazarin, and attempt literally and really to rule for himself. Such also was the opinion of all the court; but, nevertheless, Louis had already made up his mind, and when Harlay de Chamvalon, president of the assembly of the clergy, presented himself after the death of Mazarin, to ask the king whom

he should address himself to in future upon affairs of state, Louis replied at once, “ To me.”

Though the answer was distinct, and given in that tone of determination which might have convinced those who heard it that Louis’s determination was formed upon full consideration, no one would believe that a king twenty-two years of age could persist in carrying into effect a resolution which implied the sacrifice of time, repose, amusement, and pleasure, as well as the endurance of manifold anxieties, labours, and pains. Nevertheless, the young monarch persevered; and all those who were around him and who had the power of judging unbiassed by their own aspirations or hopes, soon saw that Louis not only possessed the talent necessary to govern the country for himself, but the will to undertake it, and the determination to carry that will into execution.

Amongst the first acts of his authority, the young monarch sent for the superintendant, represented to him his extravagance, pointed out the deranged state of the finances, and warned him that he must change his conduct, abandon the unjust proceedings by which he supplied the means for his enormous expenses, and ameliorate the general system of finance.

Fouquet, however, believed his favour founded on a rock, and would not suffer the idea to enter his mind that the king would really persevere in examining the long and dry statements of finance

with which he daily furnished him. Although Louis criticised those statements with a keenness and acumen which could not well spring from his own knowledge of the subject, the superintendent was still blind to the precipice on which he stood, and only strove to disgust the king with the task he had undertaken, by complicating his accounts and filling them with errors. Day after day, however, Louis, as if by magic, reduced them all to order, pointed out the faults, detected the misstatements, and completely exposed the system of deceit by which his minister endeavoured to blind him.

The secret of all this was, that every night, Colbert was introduced into the cabinet of the king by a back staircase, examined with him the accounts of the superintendent during several hours, exposed all the fallacies they contained, and enabled the king to disperse at once, on the following morning, all the clouds and darkness with which Fouquet had endeavoured to envelope his proceedings. Again and again the superintendent was warned of the consequences of the conduct he was pursuing: but Fouquet would take no warning; and seeing that the pursuit of pleasure, the joy of feeling himself free from tutelage, and the novelty of absolute command were all busy in the heart of the young king, he only applied himself to furnish the monarch with such sums as might enable him to sport at ease in the enfeebling stream of luxury and uncontrolled enjoyment.

Louis apparently yielded to the current as the superintendant could have wished ; and returning to Fontainebleau shortly after the death of Mazarin, the monarch and his whole court gave themselves up to pleasure. Louis, however, stole sufficient time from all the fascinations around him still to examine, still to judge, still to act for himself.

At other times, however, all was splendour, gaiety, and amusement. The monarch's brother, the young Duke of Anjou, married but a few weeks to Henrietta of England, brought his bride to Fontainebleau, now full of charms both personal and mental; and Louis began to suspect that the distaste which he had felt towards her, when a marriage between them had been proposed, might have been caused by her youth at that time, and not by any real deficiency of attractions. He now admired and wondered at her grace, was amused and pleased with her wit, and found a charm in her society which led him somewhat more from that of the queen than was pleasing to her or to the queen-mother.

“ Every day,” says Madame de la Fayette “ she” (Henrietta) “ went to bathe : she went thither in a carriage on account of the great heat, and came back on horseback, followed by all the ladies magnificently dressed, with a thousand feathers on their heads, accompanied by the king and all the youth of the court. After supper they got into calèches, and went to wander a part of the night round about the canal.”

The staid and prudent Madame de Motteville herself seems to have been affected by the spirit of gaiety and enjoyment which reigned at the court, and her painting is much more animated than usual. “Besides the princesses and ladies of the court,” she says, “the ladies of the two queens and of Madame held a great place therein, and amongst them some were extremely beautiful. Balls, plays, promenades, and hunting-parties were frequent; nothing seemed to be wanting in that agreeable abode which could amuse. The different courts and the different gardens of Fontainebleau seemed enchanted palaces and gardens, and its wildernesses the Elysian Fields.”

In the midst of all this scene of amusement and joy, the king’s attentions to his fair sister-in-law soon began to call the notice of the court. The queen, whose situation prevented her from mingling in the gayer and more fatiguing parties which took place, became jealous of Henrietta of England; the queen-mother shared in her anxiety, and Anne of Austria took upon her to lecture her son upon the impropriety of his conduct, forgetting that that son was no longer a youth, but a man of a strong and commanding mind, who enjoyed his power and felt himself a monarch.

The effect was such as might be expected: the jealousy of the queen and the interference of his mother drove Louis more than ever from their society. But their conduct had another effect, if we may

believe Madame de la Fayette. It opened the eyes of Louis and of Henrietta to the passions which were springing up in their hearts ; but it did not in any degree induce them to alter their conduct, unless indeed by establishing a link of secret feelings between them, far more dangerous than the public gallantry which had taken place before. Henrietta, piqued and annoyed at some reproofs of the queen-mother, exerted her influence to the utmost to draw the king away from the court of Anne of Austria to her own select circle ; but, in order to conceal from the world in general any more tender feelings between herself and the king, it was determined that Louis should enact the part of lover to some of the ladies of the household.

To select an object for this feigned passion, the king, the princess, and their confidants chose several girls well calculated by their grace and beauty really to attract the attention of the king. The three who more particularly attracted attention were, Mademoiselle de Pons, who, we are told, was very handsome, but was not particularly clever; Mademoiselle de Chemerault, one of the queen's maids of honour, likewise handsome, but rather too clever ; and Mademoiselle de la Vallière, one of the ladies of honour to Henrietta of England, who is described well by Madame de la Fayette as very pretty, very gentle, and very innocent. Madame de Motteville enters more into the detail of her appearance, and says, “ Her beauty

had great attractions, by the brilliant fairness and the carnation of her complexion; by the blue of her eyes, which were full of sweetness; and by the beauty of her flaxen hair, which increased that of her countenance." Her person, however, was not without defects; for though her figure was good and graceful, she was slightly lame.

These three having been selected as worthy of being the ostensible objects of those gallantries on the part of the king which were only intended to cover more real and more dangerous feelings, Louis went rather farther than he had agreed upon with his fair sister-in-law, and instead of choosing one of the three to pay his court to, he made love to all three at once. He at the same time displayed a certain degree of tenderness towards the Countess of Soissons, and a good deal more to Henrietta herself; so that the example of levity which he set his whole court was not very likely to improve the morals of an immoral assemblage.

Mademoiselle de Pons was removed from the court at once by the queen-mother, with an unceremonious haste which called forth some severe animadversions from Louis. With Mademoiselle de Chemerault, it would seem, that his amour went to criminal lengths; but his heart spoke out in favour of La Vallière. To her all his serious attention was now directed, and the court soon perceived that a change had come over the whole feelings of the king. Anne of Austria, having

already more than once quarrelled with her son on the subject of his gallantries, and convinced that in the present instance to oppose him would be vain, determined to enter into a compromise with her morality, and, while she left Louis to follow his inclinations unopposed, to do the best she could to conceal from the knowledge of the queen the intrigue that she could not prevent.

In the mean while, cabals of a more important nature were going on at the court of France. The efforts to obtain the post of prime minister still continued, and Le Tellier, who undervalued the powers of Colbert and entertained no apprehensions of finding a rival in him, leagued with that minister for the destruction of Fouquet, whose extravagance, ostentation, and deceit had already injured him deeply in the opinion of the king.

Not far from Fontainebleau itself, Fouquet was at this very time engaged in completing a palace which he had long since begun, and which already exceeded any of the royal residences in beauty and splendour. Eighteen millions of livres had been expended upon it : hamlets had been swept away to form its gardens ; waterworks had been constructed, at an immense expense, far excelling anything which had been then seen in France : and Fouquet, proud of the splendour and taste he had displayed, had, shortly after the king's marriage, invited the whole court to a fête at his palace at Vaux, which surpassed any entertainment yet given in that

country. The arms of the finance minister were seen painted in every part of the building ; and his device, written below it, though applicable to the coat above, was made use of by the malice of the courtiers to insinuate that a wild ambition was the ruling passion of the superintendent. The arms were, a squirrel springing up the branch of a tree, with a snake pursuing it ; and the motto, *Quò non ascendet?** The young monarch, whose knowledge of Latin was at the best very limited, demanded the meaning of the words, and learning that they were, “ *Whither will he not rise?*” was easily led to believe that they were signs of an ambitious spirit which might ultimately prove dangerous to the state. At the same time, the witty courtiers who surrounded the king remarked that the serpent which pursued the squirrel formed the arms of Colbert.

If there were two of these festivals given at Vaux, which perhaps was the case, the most famous is that said to have taken place on the 20th of August 1661. Magnificence and ostentation were therein carried to such a pitch, that the fables of Eastern splendour seemed realized. The court of Louis himself was entirely eclipsed by that of Fouquet, as the palaces of the monarch were

* This has been usually written *Quo non ascendam?* which makes the use for which the courtiers employed it more apparent and easy : but M. Delort assures us that in the arms of Fouquet, painted opposite to his picture in a folio volume in the Bibliothèque Mazarine, the words are as we have given them.

by the mansion of the superintendant, and nothing was beheld around but splendour and profusion. Canals, fountains, cascades, all the product of art, ornamented the gardens ; long alleys of trees, green walks, shady bowers and grottoes, wide esplanades and magnificent terraces, were seen covered with all that was great and noble in France. Games of chance or of skill were ready at every turn to stimulate the fatigued mind, and troops of comedians and musicians were prepared to amuse the fancy or to soothe the ear. Even when, wearied out with pleasure or chagrined with losses, the courtier quitted the ball-room or the gaming-table and sought his own apartment, he found on his dressing-table purses full of gold, supplied by the magnificent ostentation of the master of the mansion.

All that talent could do, we are assured, had been done, as well as all that riches could accomplish, to render the abode of the superintendant beautiful as well as magnificent ; and the poetry of La Fontaine was ready to celebrate the charms of a place whose master, one of the most liberal patrons of genius, had shown himself especially the friend of the *Aesop* of his age. Yet, though Le Brun and Le Nôtre had contributed their utmost efforts to the embellishment of Vaux, a melancholy presentiment appears to have affected La Fontaine while composing his celebrated “*Songe de Vaux*.” He seems to have felt that, even in the acme of its

splendour, the seeds of destruction were sown in its gardens and already springing up within its walls ; and he places in the mouth of Calliope the following remarkable words :

“ Sans moi, tant d’œuvres fameux,
Ignorés de nos neveux,
Périroient sous la poussière.
Au Parnasse seulement
On emploie une matière
Qui dure éternellement.”

“ Si l’on conserve les noms,
Ce doit être par mes soins,
Et non point par vos machines :
Un jour, un jour l’univers
Cherchera sous vos ruines
Ceux qui vivront dans mes vers.”

It can be but little doubted that the splendour of Fouquet excited the jealousy of the courtiers far more than his liberality attached them. Of one thing, however, there can be no doubt,—that his ostentation displeased the monarch : and it is reported by many authors that the king was so exasperated on the present occasion, as to propose to arrest the superintendent in the midst of the festival. From this he was dissuaded, we are told, by Anne of Austria. But I am very much inclined to believe that such was not the case ; for in such circumstances many particulars are always added by the imagination, even of contemporaries, which, of course, submit to additions and improvements under the hands of those that follow. The simple fact

of the ostentation of Fouquet would scarcely have been sufficient to justify so violent a step on the part of the king; but in order to assign a sufficient cause for the vehemence of Louis's anger, writers have invented or discovered a still greater offence on the part of Fouquet, and have declared that he was at that very time pursuing Mademoiselle de la Vallière with the same vicious purposes as the king. In regard to this fact, however, I have very many doubts, as the sole foundation for the supposition is to be found in a letter from Madame du Plessis Belièvre of very doubtful authenticity, and in the confused and anecdotal memoirs of the Abbé de Choisy.

The letter of Madame du Plessis, as well as several other infamous epistles of the same kind, were afterwards publicly and solemnly pronounced by Fouquet to be forgeries; and there are so many discrepant accounts* in regard even to the date of the celebrated fête at Vaux, that it would seem

* The famous festival at Vaux is generally said to have taken place on the 20th of August 1661. In no work, however, which I have read upon that subject, have I found this date established by any incontrovertible proof; for Bussy, although he gives that year, differs with all others regarding the day. I do not mean to say that it may not have been so established; for it is possible not only that proofs may exist which I have never seen, but that I may have overlooked some proof of it in works that I myself possess. In many of those works, however, I have found distinct reason to believe that the date has been mis-stated; which reasons I shall now proceed to assign.

In the first place, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, in that part of

to me extremely doubtful whether the superintendant had ever seen Mademoiselle de la Vallière at the time of the splendid festival of which we are

her memoirs which is by far the most accurate, from the epoch being nearer to the period at which she wrote, places the festival given at Vaux not in 1661, but in the preceding year, immediately after the return of Louis with his young Queen from the Pyrenees, and between the period of their arrival at Fontainebleau and their formal entry into Paris. The fact of their having gone to Vaux in that year is not mentioned, indeed, by Madame de Motteville ; but she gives no account of the proceedings of the court at Fontainebleau in 1660, and confirms in the most minute particulars all the other facts by which this is surrounded in the memoirs of Mademoiselle.

It was not till the year following that Mademoiselle de la Vallière first appeared at court, entering it as a maid of honour to Henrietta of England ; which Mademoiselle notices at its proper period in the following laconic terms : "Madame de Choisy donna à Madame la petite de la Vallière pour fille." She speaks of no other festival at Vaux than this, and marks in such a manner that it cannot be mistaken, that the one to which she alludes took place between the arrival of the court at Fontainebleau on the 13th of July 1660, and the public entrance of the King into Paris on the 26th of August. She implies also that it was on the road from Fontainebleau, on his journey towards the capital, that the King visited Fouquet ; which would in some degree account for the magnificence of the entertainment, as the whole country was in a state of excitement from the King's recent marriage. Those too who look into La Fontaine will find in the "Songe de Vaux," and in the history of the Swan, that at the time of that festival the Queen was not yet known to be pregnant, which must have been the case had it taken place on the 20th of August 1661, as her first child was born in the beginning of November following. That the Queen was at Vaux on this occasion cannot be doubted by any one who reads La Fontaine ; and yet for more than two months before the King's departure for Brittany, in the same month of

now speaking. At the same time it is reasonable to suppose that Louis saw the immense wealth of Fouquet with surprise and suspicion, that he marked

August 1661, she had been excluded, by her hopes of an heir to the throne, from mingling in any of the fatiguing pleasures of the court.

Nor are these the only reasons for believing that the mistake of a year has been made in this date; for the memoirs of Artagnan, who was present, also place it in the preceding year. The contempt with which Fouquet treated him on this occasion in consequence of a previous quarrel, and Artagnan's own feelings and conduct, are all so minutely dwelt upon, that it is clear, not only that this part of the memoirs is from his own hand, but that it was written while the memory was fresh upon him, and, I am even inclined to believe, between the period of the fête and the arrest of Fouquet, inasmuch as Artagnan mentions the scorn with which Fouquet treated him without any reference in that place to the fact of his having afterwards arrested with his own hand the very man who then ill-treated him. The memoirs of Artagnan refer throughout to this fête as the only one of the kind which took place at Vaux, and as that which ruined Fouquet in the opinion of the King, by showing him that the superintendant's expenses were such as no private fortune or honest profits of office could supply. Even supposing the whole of those memoirs to have been written by Sandras de Courtiz, he was better acquainted with the events of that day than any one now living.

There may have been another fête at Vaux in 1661; but if there was not, the event took place before the arrival of Mademoiselle de la Vallière at the court. The marriage of Henrietta of England to the young Duke of Anjou took place in April 1661; and it was, as we have said, on that occasion that Mademoiselle de la Vallière was appointed one of her maids of honour. It is scarcely necessary to point out the inaccuracy of M. Delort in saying that "Mademoiselle de la Vallière was received amongst the number of maids of honour to Madame when she was fourteen years of age; she was in her seventeenth year at

his ostentation with jealousy and indignation, and that never after the festival of Vaux did he feel towards the superintendant as he previously had done.

In the mean while, it is evident that from time to time Fouquet entertained apprehensions, and took measures to secure for himself support and assistance in case of need. How far, indeed, his plans went,—whether he proposed to offer actual resistance to the king, or whether he merely endeavoured to create such powerful intercessors as might in time of danger or difficulty interfere to save him from the royal indignation,—is not at all clear. It is certain, however, that while, according to the account of Gourville, he neglected a great many of those persons whom he had courted assiduously before the death of Mazarin, he at the same time made every effort to gain the friendship of the Prince de Condé, and laboured to give his friend

the time of the arrest of Fouquet," for Henrietta of England, who had no court till her marriage, was married on the 30th of March or 1st of April 1661, and Fouquet was arrested on the 5th of September of the same year; so that the unhappy mistress of Louis XIV. had only been five months at the court at that time, and unless five months added to fourteen years will make seventeen years, the whole statement is inaccurate.

Voltaire took his own account of these transactions entirely from the anecdotes of the Abbé de Choisy, at whom he scoffs continually. I have found the Abbé almost uniformly correct where he speaks of things recently passed and which he had witnessed himself,—incorrect throughout in everything else. Now he was probably not present at the fete at Vaux, and if so, was only seventeen years of age when it took place.

and great supporter Crequi such a post as would enable him to afford him efficient assistance in arms should it be necessary. Having purchased Belleisle from the Duc de Retz, he caused fortifications of a very important kind to be constructed there; and a general rumour began to diffuse itself through the court, that his intention was, first to make every effort to force himself upon the king as prime minister; but, if he should fail in the attempt and any endeavour be made to arrest and punish him, then to throw himself into Belleisle, raise the standard of revolt against the king, and seek aid from England.

All the memoirs of the time show that such an impression was general. Doubtless, however, a great part of these rumours and reports were spread by his enemies and by those who sought his downfall, and it may be necessary for a moment to mark the intrigues which were carrying on against him.

Colbert hated him with a sort of natural antipathy, proceeding, probably, from the opposition in every point of their two characters. Calm, calculating, simple in his tastes, clear, accurate, orderly, and, above all, honest, harsh and repulsive to the court, and severe to others as to himself,—Colbert hated in Fouquet the vain, extravagant, lavish, generous man, the graceful and engaging courtier, and the scheming and wide-reaching minister. Fouquet, likewise, held a post to which Colbert aspired; and the latter proceeded to seek

his ruin with a cold determination which is one of the worst traits in that minister's history.

Fouquet, in the mean time, made no effort against Colbert, esteeming him too little to fear him. He had laboured hard since Mazarin's death to obtain the support of the queen-mother, who, though she did not attempt to meddle any more in politics, gave her countenance in some degree to the superintendant. Louis, whose affection for his mother was sincere, and who felt that he had offended, and was likely to offend her, in many of the particulars of his private life, was unwilling to take any harsh measures against a man to whom she gave even a slight degree of support.

Thus, in the progress of the schemes of Colbert and Le Tellier, the first impediment was Anne of Austria's opposition to their views of removing Fouquet. The next impediment was found in the official situation which Fouquet held in the parliament of Paris. He was procureur-general in that body; and Mazarin had strongly cautioned Louis, when speaking upon the subject of Fouquet, on no account to embroil himself with the parliament of Paris in the outset of his reign.

To remove these two impediments Colbert now applied himself with a degree of subtlety not unworthy of the master under whom he had so long served. He was well acquainted with the Duchesse de Chevreuse, who, detached from political cabals, had resumed her extraordinary influence

over Anne of Austria, and lived a life of decent intrigue with the well-known Laigues, who had made such a conspicuous figure in the Fronde.

Laigues and Madame de Chevreuse were gained by Colbert: the queen-mother was invited to fulfil an old promise, and spend a short time at Dampierre, where, under the management of Fouquet's adversaries, all his faults, errors, and vices were displayed before her. At the same time, there is reason to believe that some of the many nuns whom Anne of Austria was in the habit of visiting were employed to work upon that queen's mind. It was not found difficult to persuade her that the ruin of a man whose vices and follies had been fully exposed to her would be pleasing to God, and that to shield him from the anger of her son or the malice of his enemies would be in fact opposing the will of Heaven. She, accordingly, yielded her full consent to any measures against him which might be resorted to; and the only thing that remained, was to induce him to sell his office of procureur-general, in order that the parliament might have no excuse for interfering in his behalf.*

* Fouquet, on being questioned at his trial in regard to some of the enormous sums appearing against him in the book of his steward, replied that his steward was often charged to pay other sums besides his own personal expenses. He declared solemnly that all his own expenses were within the limits of the income he possessed from his personal property and the various high offices he held; and this assertion he offered to prove, if the papers which had been seized by his ene-

The means that were taken to effect this object are very differently related by different contemporary authors. Louis XIV. could hardly fail to gain from the instructions of Mazarin the art of dissimulation. We have seen how well he employed it at a very early age in the case of De Retz; and with Fouquet he used the same skill, only longer and more perseveringly. He assumed towards the superintendant, as soon as he gave up all hope of reforming him and had determined upon his ruin, a far milder and more gracious aspect than before: he received him with smiles, he appeared to rely on his opinion, and Fouquet was easily led to believe that honours and successes were in store for him.

By some we are told that the highest decoration in the king's power to bestow was held out to the superintendant as an inducement to sell his office of procureur, the king having bestowed the same order shortly before on another member of the parliament, and having made a rule never to give it to more than one of that body at the same time. By others, again, we are assured that false friends were employed to represent to Fouquet that the

mies were restored to him to enable him to do so. The papers were not restored; and the editor of the "Mémoires sur la Bastille,"—memoirs, though displaying strong prejudices, invaluable in themselves,—says that Fouquet declared his steward had paid large sums for the service of the king, and adds, "History says that this money had been remitted to the Queen-mother, and that the Queen had denied it."

office of procureur-general was incompatible with that of prime minister, and, therefore, that the king would never appoint him to the latter office until he had resigned or sold the former. To give full effect to this insinuation, Louis, we are told, showed the superintendent greater favour than ever; and though by this time Fouquet had heard a rumour of the nightly conferences of the king and Colbert—though Gourville had warned him that a strong party was forming against him, and that his ruin was looked upon as certain—though anonymous letters and private messages day by day gave more vague intimations of his danger, yet he would in no degree believe in its existence, or take proper measures to obviate it. Still Louis maintained the same smooth face towards the man he intended to ruin, and Fouquet continued to think himself in higher favour than ever. In this persuasion, he determined to sell the office of procureur; and having obtained for it the sum of fourteen hundred thousand livres, he generously cast the amount into the king's exhausted treasury.

Such an act, however, in no degree softened the resolution of the young king; he was fully persuaded by Colbert that the intentions of the unfortunate superintendent were as treasonable as his proceedings regarding the finances were fraudulent. He was anxious, too, to see the finances in the hands of one who had already laid before him a grand and feasible scheme for their restoration to

order and economy,—a scheme which he felt that Colbert, and none but Colbert, could execute. That minister showed no slowness in promoting any of the measures employed to open a place for himself; and at length it was determined that, in the end of August, the king, with a small flying camp, should visit the coast of Brittany for the apparent purpose of fixing on some spot for the formation of a great naval dépôt upon the shores of the British Channel.

Fouquet suffered himself to be deceived, and preceded the king to Nantes, where several days were passed without any steps being taken to put the monarch's determination of arresting him into execution. In the mean while, however, troops were concentrating round the spot from several quarters, and a strong body had approached Belle-isle, and drawn a line around it, so as to cut off its communication with Nantes. Fouquet himself had, as we have said, gone forward to Nantes, even a little before the king, accompanied by his wife and his two principal clerks; and he was followed shortly afterwards by Gourville, who had already warned him of his danger. Gourville, however, more wise than the superintendant, and knowing well that he had been engaged in many transactions with that minister which, in case of his disgrace, might prove ruinous to himself, took care before he left Paris to secure all his own papers of importance, and to remove them to the house of

a friend whom he could trust. This precaution proved the salvation of Gourville; but Fouquet had taken no such step, and the whole of his papers, even to letters of gallantry, were scattered in confusion throughout his whole dwelling.

Le Tellier, known to be the superintendant's enemy, accompanied the king to Nantes, together with Turenne, Clairambault, and other officers; and at the head of the musketeers of the king's guard was Artagnan, between whom and Fouquet a considerable degree of coldness had for some time existed. A thousand circumstances might have warned the superintendant of his coming fate; but some of the principal efforts to open his eyes proved abortive. The governor whom he had placed in the citadel of Belleisle, finding himself strictly invested by the king's troops, sent a messenger to Fouquet with one of the letters of credit common in those days, merely containing the words, "Give credit to what the bearer shall tell you." The messenger, however, was arrested in passing the posts of the king's army; and though he conducted himself with the utmost prudence and caution, the note was found in the heel of one of his boots, after which he was sent to Paris, where he died under the torture, rather than acknowledge that which he had been commanded to communicate to Fouquet.

An anonymous letter, however, was conveyed to the superintendant on the morning of the 5th of

September, warning him that he would be arrested that day, and advising him to provide for his immediate security. After a long consultation with his friends, in which various means were proposed for ascertaining the real intentions of the king, the minister resolved to go to the council that morning at all risks. He had just, from his private funds, supplied to the monarch a million of livres, and he could not imagine, it would seem, that Louis carried hypocrisy so far as to treat him with daily-increasing favour when his purpose was really to ruin him.

There was one, however, at the king's ear whose presence in Nantes at the time was unknown to any one but Louis himself and one domestic: this was Colbert, who, occupying no ostensible post in the ministry and already suspected by Fouquet, had entered Nantes disguised, and kept himself in strict concealment; so that even Le Tellier, his fellow-labourer in the task of overthrowing the superintendent, was unaware of his presence in the city. His nightly conferences with the king, however, had gone on; and though Louis had made Le Tellier acquainted with his plans for imprisoning Fouquet, it was to Colbert that he entrusted the execution thereof; and the financier, again, immediately fixed upon Artagnan, as a man of energy and execution, for the purpose of arresting the superintendent.

The captain of the musketeers was much sur-

prised on receiving a message early on the morning of the 5th, directing him to follow the servant who bore it, in order to speak with Colbert, of whose arrival in Nantes he was not aware. Colbert then gave him orders in the king's name to arrest Fouquet as he came from the council; and although Artagnan felt some scruples at undertaking the task on account of the enmity that existed between him and the superintendent, his remonstrances were overruled, and he was sent to the levee of the king to receive farther commands.

The demeanour of Louis upon this occasion affords so peculiar a view of his character even at the age of twenty-three, that we must give it in the words of Artagnan himself. "I went to the levee," says that officer,* "that very moment; and the King, who was already prudence itself, having perceived me, began to interrogate me upon my company, and ordered a quantity of things regarding it. However, being desirous of farther misleading those who were listening to us, as he had already just done, he asked me how such and such people were, naming some persons of distinction. I replied all that I knew about them: upon which his majesty, drawing me apart into a window as if

* In a part of his memoirs which I judge to be written by himself, from that internal evidence which, to my mind, marks quite sufficiently the difference of those passages which were from his own hand, and those which were interpolated by Sandras de Courtiz.

he wished to say something which regarded them, asked me in a low tone if Monsieur Colbert had spoken with me. I replied, that he had; that I had just quitted him; that he had told me I was to arrest Monsieur Fouquet, and to come for his majesty's orders thereupon. The King replied, that such being the case, he had nothing more to command; but that I must take great care of the execution of this commission, and, above all, not to let him speak to anybody after I had seized upon him: that he, the king, had been informed that Fouquet had been warned of the design of arresting him; that he did not know whether such was the case or not; but if it were so, he might endeavour to fly to Belleisle; on which account I was to watch him from that moment, lest, pretending to come to the council, he should take another path than that for the citadel."

Fouquet, however, came to the council as usual, though he was ill at the time. Of his demeanour there, indeed, there are very various and opposite accounts; some saying that he remained perfectly cool and composed, while others declare that he was so greatly agitated that he could scarcely reply to the questions of the king, who was resolved to gain every possible information from him concerning the state of his own department before he caused him to be arrested. Louis treated him perfectly in his usual manner, however; though the

number of questions that he asked, and his perseverance in obtaining a distinct reply, protracted the sitting of the council for near two hours.

Fouquet at length took his leave and went out, followed from the ante-chamber by a crowd of courtiers. In the court below, however, Artagnan was waiting for him, with thirty musketeers of the guard, dispersed in small groups around so as not to attract attention. The officer suffered him to proceed a short way, and then approaching, informed him that he was under arrest; upon which all the sycophants who fawned around him fled like clouds before the wind and left him to his fate. Some one, however, hastened to make known the fact to Gourville, who was conversing at the time with Turenne and Clairambault. The Prince de Marsillac was also present, and Gourville, who never forgot any precaution in a moment of danger, besought that nobleman to run to his lodgings and carry off a casket in which his most valuable effects were contained, while he hastened to see what he could do at the house of Fouquet himself.

Madame Fouquet had received an order to betake herself to Limoges; but the officers of the king were already in the house, sealing up all the doors; and the wife of him who ten minutes before had at his command the whole revenues of France, now found only fifteen louis-d'ors in her purse. Gourville, however, supplied every deficiency, and

provided the wife of his former benefactor with all that she needed for the time.

Pelisson, afterwards famous in the world of letters, and another chief clerk of the superintendent, were arrested with him: all his papers were seized, and the secrets of many families were developed by the examinations that ensued. To avoid this exposure, Fouquet's brother, the Abbé, on hearing of his arrest, proposed to set fire at once to his house at St. Mandé, where the greater part of the more dangerous documents were collected; but others hesitated at such a bold step, and the whole mass of papers fell into the hands of the government. Gourville, by his presence of mind and skill in using his knowledge of men's characters, avoided being arrested, and continued for some time to live on familiar terms with the ministers, passing most of his evenings in gambling with the king. Fouquet was first conducted a prisoner to the castle of Angers, thence to Vincennes, and afterwards to the Bastille.

The proceedings of the king through all these events show his character as completely formed and distinctly marked as if he had reigned for years. The Louis XIV. of three-and-twenty, with the reins of state just fallen into his hands, is the same that he appears through life; and the letter which he wrote to his mother on the arrest of Fouquet might have been composed by him at any period of his long reign. It is as follows:—

“MADAME MY MOTHER,

“I have already written to you this morning the execution of the orders which I had given for arresting the superintendent, but I wish now to send you the details of the affair. You know that for some time past I have had it at heart; but it was impossible to do it sooner, because I wished first to make him pay thirty thousand crowns for the marine, and moreover there were a great many things to be settled which could not be done in a day; and you cannot imagine the trouble I had even in finding the means of speaking to Artagnan in private, for I am overwhelmed all day long by a number of sharp people who on the slightest sign might have seen deeper than I wished. Nevertheless, two days ago, I ordered him to hold himself ready, and to make use of Du Claveau and Maupertuis in the absence of the *maréchaux de logis* and brigadiers of my musketeers, the greater part of whom are ill.

“I was very impatient indeed that all this should be finished, not having anything else to keep me in this place. At length, this morning, having come to do business with me according to custom, I kept him amused, sometimes with one thing, sometimes with another, and pretended to be searching for papers, until through the windows of my cabinet I saw Artagnan in the court of the castle; and I then suffered the superintendent to go, who, after

having talked a few minutes with La Feuillade, disappeared just as he was bowing to Le Tellier, — so that poor Artagnan fancied he had missed him, and sent Maupertuis to tell me that he suspected some one had told him to escape : but he overtook him in the Square of the Cathedral, and arrested him in my name towards mid-day. He demanded the papers that he had upon him, amongst which, they tell me, I shall find an account of the true state of Belleisle ; but I have so many other things to do, that I have not been able to see them yet. Nevertheless, I have commanded Monsieur Boucherat to go and seal up everything at the house of the superintendant, and Monsieur Pellet at the house of Pelisson, whom I have caused to be arrested also. I had pretended that I wished to hunt this morning, and under this pretext had caused my carriages to be prepared, and my musketeers to mount : I had also commanded the companies of guards who are here to exercise in the meadows, in order to have them quite ready to march upon Belleisle. No sooner then was the affair done, than they put the superintendant into one of my carriages, and conveyed him to the chateau of Angers, followed by the musketeers, (who will wait for me there,) while his wife, by my order, goes to Limoges.

“ Fourille marched instantly to Belleisle with my companies of guards, and has orders on their arrival at the roads to detach Chavigny to command in the

place with a hundred French and sixty Swiss ; and if by chance he whom the superintendant placed there should endeavour to make resistance, I have given him orders to force an entrance.

“ I had at first resolved to wait for news ; but all the orders have been so well given, that according to appearances, the thing cannot fail ; and thus I shall return without farther delay, so that this is the last letter I shall write to you upon this journey.

“ I have since spoken upon this event with the gentlemen who are here with me, and have told them frankly that I had formed my project four months ago ; that there was no one who knew it but you ; and that I had only communicated it to Monsieur Le Tellier two days before, that the necessary orders might be given. I declared to them also that I would have no more superintendants, but would labour at the finances myself, with faithful persons to act under me, knowing that such was the true means of securing myself abundance, and of relieving my people. You will have no difficulty in believing that many a one was out of countenance ; but I am well pleased that they should see that I am not the dupe they imagined, and that the best plan is to attach themselves to me.”

It will be remarked that no mention is made of Colbert in this letter ; but as soon as Fouquet was arrested, a commission was appointed to try him, consisting of twelve commissaries, the whole of

them evidently chosen by Colbert. The chancellor was at the head of this body; and three relations and dependants of Colbert,—Pussort, Hottman, and Pellet,—were members of it, besides several other persons bound by different ties to obey the superintendent's two great enemies, Le Tellier and Colbert. Had this commission proceeded to his trial, composed as it was of the creatures of his adversaries, there can be little or no doubt that he would speedily have been condemned to death; but it was remodelled, in consequence of an accidental discovery.

Proceeding from his house at St. Mandé, to a house on the other side of the road, which was occupied by one of his clerks, was found a subterranean passage, opening into a cabinet in the latter house appropriated to himself. Behind a mirror in that cabinet was discovered a thick manuscript, containing the project of a general rising against the government, with directions to all Fouquet's friends as to what part they should play in case of his arrest. Every word of the document might well be construed into treason; but there was not the slightest proof that it was anything but a vague, wild vision: and the testimony of Gourville proves not only that it was so, but that it was written under other circumstances, when Mazarin was at the head of affairs, and labouring for the destruction of Fouquet. In the hands of prejudiced judges, however, this document would have proved

his ruin ; but a curious accident caused a change in the commission, and saved the life of the superintendent. At the time when the court was at St. Jean de Luz, Colbert, who was even then labouring against Fouquet, and was anxious to put the finances into a better train, had drawn up and sent to Mazarin the project of a Chamber of Justice for investigating the state of the finances, punishing peculators, and forcing those brokers of the revenue, then called *partisans*, to disgorge the immense wealth they had acquired by the plunder of the revenue. He had carried his views so far, that the persons of whom he intended to compose this Chamber of Justice were individually named ; and the ruin of Fouquet was to be the first step to a general reformation of the finances. This paper, by the efforts of some friend, had been abstracted from the custody of Mazarin, and placed for a few hours in the hands of Fouquet himself, who not only took means to counteract the efforts of Colbert at the time, but sat down, and, aided by Gourville, copied out the project before he returned it.

The copy was now found amongst the papers of Fouquet ; and Colbert, anxious to prove to the King that he had long before conceived this great scheme for the reformation of the finances, brought the document to the knowledge of Louis, showed him what he had wished to attempt, laid the blame of its rejection upon Mazarin, and asked the

monarch's approval of a similar course of proceeding under the existing circumstances. Louis agreed: the former commission was changed; all the members whom Colbert had formerly suggested to Mazarin were placed upon the new list, and several of his friends and relations who had appeared in the commission appointed at Nantes were omitted in the new Chamber of Justice. This Chamber assembled at the Arsenal to take notice of all crimes committed in regard to the finance; and the members were chosen from different provincial tribunals, "as if," say the Memoirs of Artagnan, "the affair being to judge a man accused of having robbed all the kingdom, it was necessary to have people from every part of the kingdom to judge him."

The consternation and confusion created by the arrest of Fouquet were almost universal at the court of France. The greater part of the courtiers had at some time been laid under obligations by him, and had expressed their gratitude with all those superfluous terms which were not likely to raise them in the opinion of the king. All their notes upon such subjects were found amongst the papers of Fouquet; and moreover, it is painful to discover that very many of the ladies of the court of France stood upon the lists of the superintendent in a manner which rendered their virtue somewhat doubtful, causing Madame de Motteville to say, with witty severity, that it was not without

reason that ancient poets had written the allegory of Danaë and the shower of gold.

At first the apprehensions of the courtiers were so great, that almost every one abandoned the unfortunate superintendant, and not a voice was raised in his favour. Colbert and his companions triumphed completely ; and in the proceedings against him every principle of equity, as well as almost all the forms of justice and law, were violated to procure his condemnation. The Chancellor Seguier, the president of the commission, took part in the whole as an open enemy of the accused ; and while the calm and quiet Le Tellier caballed in secret against him, Colbert eagerly urged forward every severe measure with a degree of fanatical virulence which passed the bounds of ordinary hatred. The conduct of both was so open to censure, that Turenne, who of all men was the least accustomed to say severe things, remarked when some person was praising the moderation of Le Tellier, when compared with the virulence of Colbert, “ I can very well believe that Monsieur Colbert is more anxious that Fouquet should be hanged, and that Monsieur Le Tellier is more afraid that he should not.”

In the mean time, Fouquet had been conducted from Angers to Amboise, and thence to Vincennes, under the strictest surveillance, suffered to speak with nobody but his guards, and denied the use of materials for writing. The prosecution of the

inquiry into the malversation of the finances, which had been going on under the Chamber of Justice at the Arsenal, had arrived at such a point by the beginning of the year 1662, that the enemies of the superintendent felt secure of being able by the proofs under their hands to convict him of crimes worthy of death; and on the 4th of March, the trial of Fouquet himself began, by several members of the commission proceeding to Vincennes in order to interrogate the prisoner. Fouquet naturally protested against the unjust and illegal tribunal to which he was to be subjected; but the Chamber of Justice decided that the trial should go on without any regard to his protestation, and interrogation proceeded for several months in the castle of Vincennes.

At length, wearied out, and perhaps counselled to such conduct by some of his friends, Fouquet refused to answer any more, demanded a free and open trial, required that his papers should be restored to him for the means of defence, and again protested against the legality of the proceedings. Various means were taken to make him answer, but without effect: and in the course of the efforts made for that purpose there are but too strong proofs that the King acted much more as a party than a monarch or a magistrate; and, in the end, contrary to every form of law and justice, he put forth a decree in his full council, prohibiting Fouquet from appealing to his natural judges, and forbid-

ding his natural judges to interfere with or take cognizance of the case.

This took place on the 6th of July 1662; and between that time and the 18th of June in the following year, Fouquet remained at Vincennes, harassed by the continual proceedings of his enemies against him, and endeavouring to oppose as an objection to the farther course of the trial, the fact that one of the most important decrees of the court had not been notified to him at the proper time. All forms of law, however, were violated in his trial; and in the month of June 1663, he was removed to the Bastille, where he remained till the 14th of November, on which day he was brought, for the first time, before the Chamber of Justice at the Arsenal, where he was interrogated publicly in regard to his conduct.

Never were the folly, the danger, and the cruelty of the system still existing in France, by which—through the cross-examination of a man placed in a situation of imminent danger, in the face of a multitude of people—the law endeavours to make him either condemn or exculpate himself, more strongly demonstrated than in the case of Fouquet. His enemies were his judges, his king was his prosecutor; there was nothing on earth but public opinion to defend him, and his own fortitude and presence of mind; but, of course, as may always happen under such circumstances, every means were taken by the judges who

interrogated him to shake that fortitude and deprive him of that presence of mind. With the most barefaced and infamous effrontery, the chancellor, who presided over the commission, endeavoured to entangle and to embarrass him, taunting him, and falsifying his words, and urging him on topics both indecent and irrelevant,* till Fouquet, rising with indignation, reminded him of some of the acts of his past life, and pointed out his own long and tried attachment to the king, and the services which he and his family had rendered to the State in times of difficulty and distress, when but too many of the chancellor's relations were in direct opposition to the power of the Crown.

He noticed too with vehement and noble eloquence the indecent letters which his adversaries asserted had been found in his house at St. Mandé, and his observations, made on that point at a subsequent period, are too important to be passed over in silence.—They were to the following effect:—

“ I cannot conceal my horror of the outrages which my enemies have vomited against my honour at the moment of my arrest; having wickedly, and by a plot which could only be concerted by demons the most virulent, fabricated scandalous letters, which the most abandoned of prostitutes would not have either written or thought, and having had the effrontery to publish them

* In regard to the gallantries for which he was too notorious.

under the names of persons of quality, whom they sought to defame thereby, and also to render me odious to the king, and to the public, although the whole was calumniously forged in the fabric of those abominable fabricators who can never escape the proper punishment of their evil deeds, since they are so detestable that they can only be revenged by that hell which has produced them, or by a public penance which may restore the reputation of all the persons interested.

“ They have had the impudence to say that these letters were found under my seals; and those who put them in their pockets in going out of their own houses, have feigned that they found them in mine. They have mingled the names of persons therewith who might animate the king against me; and while I was rigorously confined, and kept without communication with any one, they distributed through the whole kingdom copies of these infamous compositions of an infamous author.

“ Is it possible even to hear the recital of such enormous crimes without one’s hair standing on end? Can one be sufficiently astonished at the extravagance of such rage? and can there remain any action to which people capable of committing so execrable a deed, would feel any scruple in resorting to satisfy their interest and their ambition, since they have been able to determine upon this, which is the acme of diabolical malignity?

“ They have not permitted me to examine the

papers which they maliciously inserted amongst mine. The culprits have had recourse to the authority of the king to hide them from an investigation which they had reason to fear, and there now remains for me no human way of making the truth known. *But I pray the living God, the severe punisher of perjury, in whose presence I have dictated and signed this paper, to condemn me without mercy, if these infamous letters which they have circulated through the world are not documents wickedly and calumniously fabricated by my enemies, and which never were amongst the number of my papers: and I beseech at the same time the divine justice to render this truth so known and so manifest, that the king may learn the unworthy treason they have committed, not only against me, but against his majesty, and the shameful artifices which they have employed to deceive his goodness and to animate him for my destruction.*

“ In writing the above, I have sworn to it upon the holy Evangelists of God, in presence of my counsel and of M. d'Artagnan.”

Such was the declaration of Fouquet; and the conduct of Colbert, Le Tellier, and the various agents of police, as well as that of the chancellor and several of the judges in the special commission, was so characterised by vindictive rage, malice, and injustice, that notwithstanding the propensity of human nature to believe evil rather than good, a multitude of persons were convinced that the letters were in general spurious. But, never-

theless, the virulence of Fouquet's enemies did not cease, and the persecution to which he was subjected under the pretence of law was still carried on upon the same system.

The whole trial was cruelly protracted, and did not conclude till the 20th of December 1664. But if this long and tedious proceeding was unjust and iniquitous towards Fouquet by the mental torture to which it subjected him, it was in another respect advantageous to him; for it suffered the popular mind to shake off the evil effect which had been produced by his ostentation and extravagance. It also allowed his friends and those most intimately connected with him by the ties of blood to recover from the consternation into which they had been thrown by the first tidings of his arrest and by the severe and intimidating measures used against every one who was at all implicated in his transactions, and to concert measures both for mollifying the anger of the young king, and for supplying the means of defence to a man who by the seizure of all his papers, and the almost constant deprivation of pen and ink, was denied the opportunity of disproving the accusations against him, or of explaining satisfactorily the facts which tended to criminate him.

Day by day, however, the friends of Fouquet began to recover courage. Pelisson, his clerk, devoted himself in the noblest manner to save him; multitudes to whom he had shown kindness during

his power now made every effort to serve him ; the course of public feeling changed regarding him ; and while his advocate, De Boutigny, composed in his defence one of the finest law treatises which had been written concerning the punishment of peculation, several members of the commission, but especially Ormesson, raised themselves up to oppose, in the most determined manner, the persecuting spirit of Colbert, Le Tellier, and Seguier.

It would be impossible in this work to follow more minutely than I have done this long, tedious, and cruel trial, certainly far more disgraceful to those who conducted it than even to the criminal himself, inasmuch as a sanguinary spirit of persecution is in itself one of the darkest of crimes ; and in the present instance that spirit not only showed itself throughout, but produced a number of other iniquitous acts for its own gratification. Charges of every kind, indeed, were gathered together to be circulated through Paris and be made use of by the court ; and constant collateral investigations were going on under the direction of the criminal lieutenant, who published long accounts of his discoveries against Fouquet, and, fortunately for the prisoner, exposed very clearly the base motives by which his enemies were actuated.

In the mean time, his friends laboured incessantly in his cause. He had been a munificent patron of art and genius, and it is gratifying to be able to state that all the talent of Paris was enlisted on

his behalf. The brilliant and fascinating Madame de Sévigné led the way; Hénault attacked Colbert in language which might well have conducted him to the Bastille. Pelisson, even from the heart of the prison in which he was placed, poured forth upon the world the excuses, apologies, and justifications of his master; and the celebrated Mademoiselle de Scuderi put herself at the head of those who were so eagerly employing their pens in his defence.

In the course of the trial, a trait is told of Pelisson which must not be omitted in the history of these events. He had been entrusted by Fouquet with some of his most dangerous secrets, and even had had in his possession papers which might have condemned the superintendent. He had, however, taken the precaution of burning them, without Fouquet's knowledge; and now the only difficulty was to communicate the fact of their destruction to the prisoner, in order to prevent him from entangling himself if interrogated upon the subject. Under these circumstances, Pelisson determined to give some such hints to the judges as might induce them to bring him face to face with Fouquet. These hints were such as could not affect Fouquet's cause; and the superintendent, finding that his judges were but partially informed, denied the facts. He was immediately confronted with Pelisson, who seeing Fouquet hesitate at his imagined treachery, exclaimed in a loud voice, " You would not deny the fact so boldly if you did not know that all the

papers are burnt." Fouquet understood the intention of his friend at once, and took such advantage of this manœuvre as to free himself from the difficulty into which he had been cast by his previous uncertainty regarding his papers.

All the efforts of Colbert and Le Tellier, all the iniquitous art of Seguier, proved vain in producing the effect they desired : the majority of the judges maintained their probity ;* Fouquet was found guilty of peculation, but not of high treason ; and

* Amongst those who did so, three are remarkable; Ormesson, Masnau, and Pontchartrain. The first was supposed by Fouquet and his supporters to be a personal enemy of the prisoner, and as such was challenged by him. But the same mistake affected his real enemies, and Ormesson was retained on the commission notwithstanding the challenge. The second was suffering agony of the most acute kind from a terrible disease, and during the night preceding the day when the votes were to be taken, he caused himself to be bled in the middle of the night, to enable him to do his duty the next morning. He was in court by seven o'clock ; but the chancellor perceiving his dreadful state of suffering, exclaimed "Retire, sir ! retire ! You are at the last gasp !"

"True, sir," replied Masnau ; "but I must die here !" The chancellor, however, begged him to retire for a time, and promised that the proceedings should be stayed : upon which he went out, obtained some relief, and entering, voted for the most lenient award against the unfortunate prisoner.

The third was a president of the Chamber of Accounts, who was persecuted through life by the two great enemies of Fouquet for the favourable view he took of the superintendant's case. The father was not even permitted, as usual, to resign his office to his son ; but, after a time, the inflexible sincerity of both overcame even the unchanging animosity of Colbert, and the son having been appointed first president of the Parliament of Rennes,

it being clearly proved that the French law assigned no particular punishment for the crime of which he stood convicted, he was sentenced to undergo the mildest infliction.

On the 20th of December 1664, the Chamber of Justice pronounced sentence upon Fouquet, condemning him to perpetual banishment; and doubtless that sentence was lenient, although he had already suffered an imprisonment of three years, aggravated by the torture of a trial which lasted the greater part of that time.

Louis XIV, however, took upon him to reverse the decree of a court appointed by himself, and, under the specious name of commutation, changed the sentence of Fouquet from the milder lot of exile to the dreadful fate of perpetual imprisonment. This, I believe, is the only instance in the history of modern Europe, of a monarch commuting a gentler for a severer punishment. In this instance, even shame was not permitted to act the part of justice; and Louis, subservient to the evil passions of his ministers, or moved by some private resentment of his own, cast away from him two of the most god-

so greatly distinguished himself that sometime afterwards he was named controller-general of Finances. I think that it is Gourville who mentions that he had seen Madame Fouquet come with a humble petition to Pontchartrain's levee, when the keen eye of the controller fell upon her in a moment as she hung back behind the crowd, and taking her by the hand, he led her out before all the princesses of the land, and gave her audience in preference to the great and the wealthy.

like qualities of royalty, and trampled both equity and mercy beneath his feet.

The unfortunate Fouquet was sent immediately to the citadel of Pignerol, guarded by Artagnan, and escorted by a hundred musketeers. On his arrival in that fortress, he was committed to the charge of a Captain St. Mars, commandant of the citadel, with written orders, some of the articles of which mark the tender mercies of Louis XIV. even at that early age in a manner both strange and painful.

The unhappy prisoner in whose case the king had commuted the mild sentence of banishment, pronounced by eminent judges, into the punishment of perpetual imprisonment, justly considered as more terrible than death, was by the monarch's express order deprived of all communication, either by word or writing, with any human being but his gaolers. He was prevented from quitting his chamber even for a moment on any pretext; he was deprived of the means of even writing down his thoughts; and though the relief of reading was allowed as some solace to his overloaded heart, only one volume at a time was given to him. The most extraordinary precautions were taken to guard him, and to deprive him of all means of communicating with those without; and his confessor was never informed of the prisoner's desire to perform one of the enjoined duties of his religion till the moment his presence was required.

Various motives have been assigned for a degree of rigour so extraordinary, but the most rational supposition appears to be, that Colbert, while pursuing not only eagerly, but somewhat tyrannically, his schemes for making the various financiers and farmers of the revenue, who had plundered the state under all the superintendants, disgorge their ill-gotten wealth, feared that Fouquet, if permitted to hold the slightest communication with any of them, might furnish them with the means of evading or baffling his pursuit. But at the same time there can be no doubt that private rancour, if not private vengeance, had no slight share in the severity under which the unhappy superintendant suffered.

There is too much reason to believe that the physician and the valet who attended him in Vincennes and the Bastille ended their lives in a dungeon; and we find from the records of the latter prison, that those faithful and daring friends who from time to time during the course of his trial ventured to print anything in his defence were generally arrested at once, and the day of their incarceration may be found noted, but without mention of the time of their liberation. In one instance (that of Hoyau, 1664,) the prisoner is registered as *suspected* of communicating with Fouquet during his trial, and the term of his imprisonment for this high crime is left to imagination.

It is necessary to notice particularly in this place the details of the long imprisonment of the unhappy superintendant, as the facts have been supposed to connect themselves with one of the most remarkable events in the reign of Louis XIV. which must be dwelt upon hereafter; and therefore I shall proceed at once to mention all the principal changes which took place in the system pursued towards Fouquet, without waiting till the chronological order of events would bring us to the period of each occurrence.

Fouquet arrived at the citadel of Pignerol—a town which France had half stolen, half bought from Piedmont in the beginning of January 1665.—In the first instance, he seems to have been treated with courtesy, but guarded with the ordinary precautions against the escape of a prisoner, and with the degree of rigour which was necessary to prevent his holding any communication with persons without. In all other respects he seems to have been well treated. A servant was allowed to attend upon him: no restriction was made in regard to the clothes which were to be furnished him, except his own convenience or necessity. Six thousand livres per annum, then a very considerable sum, was given for the maintenance of himself and his servant, besides an ample allowance granted for light and firing.

A single book at a time was, as we have said, afforded him; but it was strictly examined both

when given to him and when returned, in order to prevent the possibility of his receiving or conveying intelligence. That such precautions were rendered necessary by the anxious and eager efforts of Fouquet to communicate with his friends without, is apparent from the whole history of his imprisonment; and that, notwithstanding the very strict surveillance to which he was subjected, he did partially accomplish that design, is shown to be probable by various facts which have not been sufficiently noticed.

His demands for a confessor were very frequent, so that it at length became evident that he used this means for the purpose of seeking information ; and thenceforward the confessor was only admitted to him four times in the year.

Shortly after, he demanded the use of a telescope ; which caused the governor to suspect that some of his friends or dependants had arrived at Pignerol, and had found means of establishing a communication with him by signals. Strict inquiries being consequently made, it was found that two of his former servants had come privately into the neighbourhood ; and in consequence of this discovery they were commanded immediately to leave that part of the country.

Whatever was liberal in the conduct of the court, however, was in no degree diminished. Two books were allowed him at a time, instead of one ; the sum granted for furnishing his apartments was

augmented; the governor was permitted to change, if he thought fit, the servant allowed to the superintendent, and to give him another at his own discretion if the former valet fell ill; and it is clearly explained to St. Mars by one of the letters of Louvois that the sole object of the government was to prevent the possibility of Fouquet's escape, or of his holding communication with any one.

In the course of the same year the citadel of Pignerol was struck by lightning, and the apartments of Fouquet himself at once cast into ruins. He and his servant, however, escaped as if by a miracle, and he was carried for a time to the fort de Pérouze, from which place he was again removed in the month of August 1666. The unfortunate prisoner, however, in the mean while still showed the most extreme desire to give and to receive intelligence. Deprived of paper, pen, and ink, he nevertheless contrived to supply the place of the two last by manufacturing pens out of the bones of fowls, and ink from wine and soot; paper by some means he contrived to obtain, and his servant was supposed to afford him the means of procuring it.

All this was soon discovered, however: the papers which Fouquet had written were taken out of the back of the chair in which he concealed them, and the pens, ink, and manuscripts were sent to the minister. The rigours of his imprisonment were now somewhat increased; but nevertheless the servant who had attended him having fallen ill,

Louis, with his own hand, gave an express order for the man to be permitted to go wheresoever he pleased,—clearly showing that it was not against any scandalous tales which might be sent forth by the superintendent that the monarch took precautions, but rather against the transmission of that important intelligence which he might convey either to the enemies of the country, or to persons who were writhing under the iron grasp of Colbert, while that statesman squeezed from them the golden blood of peculation drop by drop.

One of the most important letters, however, of all those which were written in regard to the detention of Fouquet, is that from Louvois to St. Mars, dated the 12th of December 1665. It would appear that Fouquet had established a communication with his former servant, who had remained in the prison, and who betrayed him to the governor; that he had contrived to write in the margins of the books and on his pocket-handkerchiefs, and that St. Mars having obtained these writings, sent them immediately to Louvois. That minister then replied as follows :—

“ Your two letters of the 14th and 21st of last month have been given to me, together with the accompanying book and pocket-handkerchiefs. The King approves the exertions that you make to deprive Monsieur Fouquet of all sorts of means of writing or of receiving letters, and he will judge right all the precautions that you shall think ne-

cessary to take for the future. As his majesty does not wish in any degree to discover the sentiments of Monsieur Fouquet, and desires only that he may have no communication with anybody whatsoever, he does not judge that it is right to continue the commerce which he had with his first valet, and you can let him leave you when you think fit."

The same sentiments are repeated in a letter of a later date; and it is clear that Louis, whatsoever passion he might entertain for his mistresses, was not at all actuated, as has been supposed, by any fear of the superintendant making indiscreet disclosures concerning them, which might have been done by means of the valet, with whom he had been so long in communication, and who was now suffered to go forth into the world, as well as by writing or any other means. It is evident, therefore, that the secrets which Louis was desirous of shutting up for a time within the walls of Pignerol were of a political nature, which would have required for their development longer and more minute details than could be conveyed by word of mouth.

Still, it would seem that Fouquet endeavoured to establish a communication with his friends in France, and every means that it is possible to conceive, he employed for that purpose. He wrote upon the ribbons which oramented his clothes, and upon the linings thereof; and when he was prevented from pursuing that plan farther by the governor causing his clothes to be lined with black, and giving him

none but ribbons of the same colour, he contrived to purloin pieces of the table-linen, in order to fabricate paper. Each discovery of this kind was of course followed by some measure to prevent the recurrence of such attempts. Two servants were given to Fouquet instead of the one which had been lately assigned to him, and with whom he was discontented: but they were given for the purpose of acting as spies upon each other, and received intimation on entering the apartments of Fouquet that they were never to issue forth again except by the gates of death. In short, the efforts made by the prisoner only served to render his imprisonment more strict.

By some means he contrived to seduce both the valets to open a communication with the soldiers of the garrison, and even to convey bribes to some of them. Immediately his windows were grated, and impediments placed in such a manner as to prevent the prisoner from seeing anything but the sky: but, nevertheless, while the gross and shameful injustice of commuting Fouquet's sentence into perpetual imprisonment, and of preventing him from holding communication with his fellow-creatures is fully admitted, it seems clear that this resolution once taken, no kind of severity was shown to the prisoner in consequence of his attempts to communicate with those without, except such as was absolutely necessary to frustrate that object.

Towards the year 1672 the rigour of Fouquet's

imprisonment was somewhat abated; and it is worthy of remark, that about that period the pursuit of the subordinate financiers from whom Colbert had been wringing large sums of money had been nearly brought to an end. Gourville himself had been suffered to return to France, and was even rising daily in the favour of the minister.

In October 1672, for the first time since his imprisonment, Fouquet was permitted to receive a letter from his wife, and to answer it under the sanction of Louvois. From that time forward the imprisonment of Fouquet gradually relaxed; and shortly afterwards, Madame Fouquet obtained permission to write to her husband twice in the year, and to receive his replies, upon condition that the letters of both were submitted to the inspection of Louvois, in order that the minister might make himself sure that no matters foreign to the concerns of the prisoner's family were introduced therein. His comforts were increased: tea, then one of the greatest rarities that could be met with, was procured for him with much care and kindness by Louvois, although sometimes only a single pound was to be found in Paris. The number of books allowed him was increased; some of the gazettes of the day were given to him; he was made acquainted with the ordinary political events, and, after the imprisonment of the Count de Lauzun, he was permitted to take the air on the

ramparts, sometimes by himself, and sometimes in company with his fellow-prisoner.

By the express order of the King, everything that could tend to their amusement during their walks, either in the nature of manly sports or of mere games, was provided, though they were not permitted to play for money; and St. Mars was now expressly directed by the King not to raise the ramparts or entrenchments higher than was absolutely requisite to prevent the escape of the prisoners, so as to avoid shutting out more of the view and the free air than was necessary. This is his express object in the directions given; and it is evident that before the end of March 1678 the imprisonment of Fouquet was so far relaxed as to permit him the

* The letter in which this relaxation is notified to St. Mars is under the hand of Louvois, and is dated on the 1st of November 1677. It is remarkable as indicating most clearly and distinctly, though indirectly, that at this very time St. Mars had under his charge other prisoners of importance besides Fouquet and Lauzun; for one of the paragraphs begins as follows, the former one having contained the announcement of the permission granted to those prisoners: "The favour which his majesty grants extends solely to Monsieur Fouquet and to Monsieur de Lauzun." The letters of Louvois to St. Mars, as far as they are extant, have been published by Delort; but it is evident to me that a number of them have been lost, or are not yet discovered, for in the collection of Delort there are evidently constant allusions to things which must have been mentioned in other letters. Changes take place in the treatment of the prisoners which St. Mars would not have dared to effect without the permission of the King, and yet no letter giving that permission appears.

free use of pen and ink and paper,—for in a letter in the beginning of April, Louvois speaks of some verses which Fouquet had written, and directs St. Mars to receive any papers which the prisoners may give to him.

For some time the health of Fouquet had been failing; and all the letters of Louvois about this period have a reference to the bad state of his health, and give directions as to the means of restoring it. At length, in December 1678, a letter from Louvois to St. Mars enclosed another sealed letter from the minister to Fouquet, which was to be given to him with the seal unbroken. He was then, by Louvois' orders, to be furnished with all the means of writing and sealing a letter, which was instantly to be forwarded to Louvois with the seal likewise unbroken; and the sealing-wax and the seal were to be left with Fouquet, in order that he might write to the minister whenever he pleased. What were the contents of these two mysterious letters we cannot tell; but the result would seem to have been an instant relaxation of almost all the former precautions taken in regard to Fouquet. The same was the case, indeed, with regard to the Count de Lauzun, but not by any means to the same degree. They were both permitted thenceforth to write to their families whenever they pleased, subject to the inspection of the minister; they were allowed to see each other constantly, and communicate without witnesses.

The officers of the garrison were permitted to speak with them, and join in their sports. They were farther allowed to walk not only in the chief tower of the citadel, but throughout its whole extent, whensocver they pleased; but with this difference,—that Fouquet was permitted to go out of the great tower accompanied merely by a single officer or one or two soldiers, while the Count de Lauzun could not do so without the presence of St. Mars himself, two officers, and six soldiers. They were permitted to speak, under very slight restrictions, with all the officers of the garrison of the town; and all the journals of the day, with as many books as they pleased of any kind, were to be given to them. In the same letter which authorizes these indulgences Louvois announces to St. Mars that probably in a short time the wife and children of Fouquet, and even the inhabitants of the town, will be permitted to see him.

It would appear that one or more letters now passed between Fouquet and persons beyond the walls of his prison without having been previously submitted to Louvois; and the minister, in courteous terms, reprimands the governor for allowing such things: but at the same time every letter bears some relaxation of the precautions which had been formerly taken, till at length, in the beginning of May 1679, his wife, his children, and his brother received permission from the king to visit the unhappy prisoner, and to remain with him at all

times without any witnesses. This, of course, was one of the greatest comforts, if we except liberty, which Fouquet could have received; but his health had by this time greatly failed. Everything was done that could properly be done, except once more giving him his freedom, to ameliorate the state of the superintendent. A chamber was prepared for his daughter adjacent to that of her father, and a communication was opened for her use between the two;* his wife was permitted to dwell in the same room with himself, and his brother and his son to visit him constantly. Nothing, however, availed; the ill health of Fouquet daily increased, and at length we find that on the 23rd of March 1680, St. Mars announced to Louvois that Fouquet was dead. His wife, his daughter, and his brother were present in Pignerol at the time. The letters of Louvois are clear and explicit: he acknowledges having received the announcement of the death; he blames St. Mars for having permitted the Viscount de Vaux, son of Fouquet, to carry off the papers of his father; and he sends an order for St. Mars to give the body of Fouquet to anybody whom Madame Fouquet should appoint, to carry it whithersoever she pleases. Gourville and Madame de Sévigné mention the death of the superintendent: and yet a question has been raised even in the present day as to whether Fouquet

* Delort says, underneath; but Louvois, in his letter, says above.

really did die in the year 1680. He was then in the sixty-sixth year of his age: and yet there are persons who have pretended that he lived in health and vigour for more than twenty-three years afterwards.

On all the mass of suppositions, which are based upon the hypothesis that the four or five letters from Louvois to St. Mars respecting the death of Fouquet were all written with a false meaning to be understood by St. Mars alone, I shall only make one or two observations. If those letters were written with a false meaning, all the rest of the letters in the collection may equally well have been so. Other letters, too, must have been sent to St. Mars, to explain the real meaning of the minister; and as the letters which are published contain a number of private directions to the governor of Pignerol to do and say things to Lauzun and others which were to be kept profoundly secret from everybody, it is evident that Louvois judged the means by which those letters were conveyed to be as secure and private as any that could be adopted. Had the letters been intended to be shown, we might well suppose that others were written to modify or alter their meaning: but the very secret directions which they contain prove that they were part of the official correspondence of Louvois and St. Mars, and nobody can rise from their perusal, who sits down to it with an unprejudiced mind, without feeling sure

that both the minister who wrote and the governor who received the letters fully believed that Fouquet was dead in 1680, though other people have thought fit to revivify him in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

This long digression has not been unnecessary, as will be found when the course of events leads to the history of the famous prisoner in the iron mask. Voltaire says that no one knew where Fouquet died, and assures us that Madame de Vaux, the superintendent's daughter-in-law, informed him that her husband's father had been set at liberty before his death. Gourville makes the same statement when speaking of an epistle which he had received from the superintendent: * but the letter from Fouquet to him was evidently identical with that which St. Mars had suffered to be conveyed, without Louvois' knowledge, at a time when Fouquet was in imprisonment. His condition was then greatly mitigated, which, together with the fact that he possessed means of conveying letters to whomsoever he pleased, might lead Gourville to believe that the superintendent was at liberty.

It is indeed a singular fact, if we may trust to the researches which, we are informed, have been made, that the coffin of Fouquet was not found in the chapel of St. François de Sales, in the convent church of the Ladies of St. Mary, where,

* The words of Gourville are, "M. Fouquet quelque tems après ayant été mis en liberté."

according to general belief, it had been interred in the year 1681, under a chapel founded by his father. But the fact that it was not found there, or, even if it should be proved, the fact that he was never buried there at all, would tend in no degree to show that Fouquet did not die in the year 1680: it would only tend to contradict the account given by a private individual (Chevalier), and to show that he had either made a false quotation from the registers of the convent, or cited registers which, there is some reason to believe, never existed at all.

To return to the affairs of France, however: the superintendent disappears from general history from the moment of his imprisonment, leaving at his departure from the political stage one of the greatest stains on the memory of Louis XIV.

While Fouquet's trial was going on, and for some time afterwards, the Chamber of Justice which had been appointed to sit at the Arsenal proceeded to examine into the conduct of the financiers, called *partisans*, and therein met little or no opposition, being gladly supported by all classes of the people in making the blood-suckers who had so long fed upon the vital current of the State disgorge their ill-gotten wealth into the treasury of the king. We learn from every account that the wealth they had amassed during the war was enormous; that their ostentation and expense were "so great," to use the words of a writer of the time, "as to put princes of the blood to shame."

The Chamber of Justice began slowly with them; and we find from the instance of Gourville that Colbert endeavoured in the first instance to obtain as much from them as he could by gentle means, before he made use of that more violent pressure to which he subjected these money-sponges afterwards. Some of them, indeed, notwithstanding the gentleness which at first seemed to prevail, took fright at the aspect of affairs. Those who had been wise enough not to invest their wealth in palaces, estates, or chateaux, made their escape to foreign countries with all their portable riches, and had the pleasure of finding themselves and their mammon safe, while the Chamber of Justice amused the boys of Paris by hanging them in effigy.

Others, however, were caught and compelled to stay, and the most enormous fines were levied upon all those who had anything wherewith to pay them. One rich broker or partisan in the hands of Colbert became as valuable to the State as any other branch of the public revenue, and the impoverished treasury of France was suddenly seen to overflow with the spoils of the spoiler.

Immense advantages immediately accrued both to the king and to the people; and though there might be a violation of law in the means adopted to strip the partisans of their ill-gotten wealth, there was, nevertheless, very little violation of justice.

At the same time, all these acts at once showed

and increased the power of the young king's government. But before we attempt to give any view of the internal affairs of France or the domestic life of the King from the epoch of the disgrace of Fouquet till the breaking out of a new war, we must turn to notice the first act by which Louis announced to foreign nations, that the feeble gentleness with which Mazarin, under the pressure of internal difficulties, had conducted the negotiations of France with her powerful neighbours was at an end, and that a monarch held the reins of government who was determined to make himself respected.

In the course of the year 1661 the famous Count D'Estrades was sent to London as ambassador by the King of France. The ambassador for Spain, named Vatteville, a native, if I mistake not, of Franche-Comté, immediately put in claims to precedence of the Count D'Estrades, on account of the pretended pre-eminence of the Spanish crown. Charles II. willing to keep peace at home, did all that he could to mollify D'Estrades, and to induce him, if not absolutely to yield precedence to the Spanish ambassador, at least to follow such a course as would avoid collision, and leave the matter undecided.

It has been suspected, indeed, that Charles, meditating his alliance with the house of Braganza, was not at all sorry to see the courts of France and Spain at enmity. However that may be, D'Estrades received instructions from his court on no account

to yield any degree of precedence to the Spanish ambassador; and the count, as well as his opponent, began to arm his retinue, and to engage in his service a great number of soldiers of fortune, in order to maintain by force, in any of the processions which were about to take place, the respective ranks to which they believed themselves entitled.

The Spanish ambassador, however, was much better furnished with money than the Count D'Estrades, and when the latter minister at length brought the matter to issue, it was without success. His carriage was broken to pieces; the populace took part with his adversaries;* some of the horses of the French ambassador were killed, several of his attendants, as well as his son, wounded; and the Spanish ambassador forcibly took precedence in the procession. The indignation of Louis when he heard these facts was extreme, and he immediately resorted to measures to make his anger felt.

Fuensaldaña, ambassador extraordinary from the King of Spain to the Court of France, received orders to quit the country. Fuentes, who was on his way as ambassador in ordinary, was ordered to halt, the French ambassador was withdrawn from Madrid, and Louis at the same time, representing the conduct which Charles II. had employed in the affair, commanded D'Estrades imme-

* It has been denied that the populace did take part in the affray; but there seems to me to exist no reasonable doubt of the fact.

dately to return to France. The King of Spain, however, was not at all disposed to quarrel with his son-in-law, and renew the war under which he had suffered so much, on account of a point of etiquette which had long before been ceded by the Kings of Spain to the Kings of France, especially at the Court of England. He commanded his ambassadors publicly to desist from such pretensions; the blame of the whole affair was thrown upon Vatteville, and a reconciliation took place between the courts of France, England, and Spain.

In the course of these transactions was written the first letter which Louis addressed to any of his ambassadors in pursuance of his determination of directing all the branches of his government himself. The commencement of that letter I give, not only because it is curious in itself, but because in the display which it affords of the young king's character, it confirms the fact which we have already noticed, that Louis XIV. from the time that he took the reins of government into his own hands, was precisely the same man which he continued till he laid them down upon the verge of the grave. The commencement of the letter is to the following effect:—

“ MONSIEUR D'ESTRADES,— I have resolved to reply myself to all the letters which I have charged my ambassadors to write to me under cover to Monsieur LIONNE, when they have anything to inform me of the importance of which

requires particular secrecy ; and to begin to follow this plan with you, I must tell you in regard to your despatches of the 25th and 28th of last month, first, in general, that they have given me cause to perceive how important it is to make a good choice in foreign appointments, as it is clear that anybody without your capacity and address would not have been able to write to me anything approaching that which you have done, nor to give me the insight which I clearly see I shall have from you, in order to choose on all occasions such resolutions as will be most to my benefit."

This is the style which Louis maintains through all his despatches to the end of his life ; leading on to exertion by grave and dignified praises, and attributing to his ministers that course of action as the result of their own mind and inclination which he wishes them to follow.

CHAPTER V.

Elevation and proceedings of Colbert.—Dearth.—Remission of Taxes.—Liquidation of the Rentes.—Views of Colbert—in favour of Agriculture—of Commerce—of Manufactures—of the Arts and Sciences.—Incomplete reform of the Laws—and improvement in the administration of Justice.—Great change effected in Society—tendency to Despotism.—Humiliation of the Pope.—Intrigues of the Court.—Mademoiselle de la Vallière.—Intrigues of Vardes and the Count de Guiche.—Conduct of the Queen and of Anne of Austria.—Flight of La Vallière.—Another account of the same event.

ALTHOUGH the bitter observation of the Marquis de la Fare, that “the history of the amours of Louis XIV. is not one of the least parts of his history, nor that part that marks his character the least,” is in all respects true, we shall, in the first place, consider some of those events which more immediately affected the general state of France, touching hereafter as lightly as a regard for truth will admit upon those irregularities of the King’s domestic life, which become important from the station of the individual, and require notice from the great effect which the king’s example had upon his people.

On the fall of Fouquet, the monarch, as we have seen by his letter, announced to his courtiers that he would have no more superintendents of finance.

The question then became, how were the finances of France to be ruled ? The great talents of Colbert were already well known to Louis, and the plans which he had suggested for increasing the revenue and diminishing the expenditure of the State had been so clear, so distinct, and so just, that the monarch had not the slightest difficulty in comprehending the details and appreciating the value of the whole. The young King justly determined that Colbert should have the execution of the schemes he had devised ; but, at the same time, his purpose of ruling all things himself prevented him from giving to that great minister the same power which had been possessed by Fouquet ; while the desire, it would appear, of gratifying the Queen-mother made him place another as the nominal head of that department, all the functions of which were really exercised by Colbert.

A council of finance was accordingly instituted, and the place of president in that council was bestowed upon the Maréchal de Villeroi ; "a man," says Madame de Motteville, "whose destiny all his life was to be proposed for the first places without ever having them, and to have the most honourable titles that a man can bear in the kingdom without performing the functions, although he was very skilful and quite capable of executing them." As he had been governor of the King while Cardinal Mazarin was superintendent of his education, and Marshal of France without

commanding her armies ; he was now declared chief of the council of finances without any authority. Under him, however, was appointed a comptroller-general ; and, to use the words of one who had good means of judging, “ that comptroller was Jean Baptiste Colbert ; a man without science and without erudition, but who had this in common with the King,—that although he had never been taught anything, he knew a thousand degrees more of everything than a number of others who had passed their youth either under Jesuits, or in other schools. He was,” the same author adds, “ a man of a very imposing aspect. In public he never laughed, and to see him one would have said he was an enemy of all pleasure. He had his mind continually ruffled with a thousand affairs ; nevertheless, he was quite as agreeable as any other in conversation when he found himself unrestrained. Thus, in seeing him with persons who were familiar with him, or with persons who were indifferent to him, there was as much difference as between night and day. He spoke admirably well also for a man without study, turning matters in such a manner that he made people believe everything that he liked.”

Such was the minister on whom the king now relied for the re-establishment of financial order in his dominions ; nor did he rely in vain. Although very great difficulties attended the first steps of Colbert, all his proceedings displayed that degree of wisdom, foresight, and extent of views, which



but confirmed the monarch more and more each day in the confidence which he placed in his minister.

The year 1660 had by no means been abundant; and the harvest of 1661 failed almost entirely. Thus, the first obstacle that encountered Colbert in the outset of his ministerial career was a degree of scarcity approaching to absolute famine. Had Fouquet been still in office in 1662, the consequences to France must have been dreadful; for the State would have been able to give no relief to the suffering people, either by a diminution of the taxes, or by a supply of necessaries. By the time, however, that the scarcity was most severely felt, the clear and lucid arrangement of Colbert had had its effect, and the wealth of the *partisans* was beginning to fill the treasury of the sovereign. Thus, Colbert was at once enabled to remit to the people three millions of taxes; and while the parliaments, pressed by a hungry population, took steps which might be excellent for temporary purposes, but which became pernicious as soon as they were permanent; while they forbade, under the severest penalties, the export of grain, and prohibited individuals from hoarding it; Colbert, labouring in conjunction with the King, bought with the money which the State now possessed immense quantities of corn in foreign markets, and poured them into the provinces, where the dearth was most severely felt.

Such was the first use made by Colbert of the

wealth which his wise measures put at the disposal of the government; but at the same time he proceeded with anxious zeal to introduce a completely new system of collecting the revenue, which immediately restored the most perfect order to those branches of the public service which had formerly been the most complicated and obscure. It would require long details, and occupy more space than could be afforded in this work to display in full the organisation of that system which Colbert introduced for the collection of the revenue. His great object, however, was to simplify it as far as possible, and to remove all those intermediate grades of financiers who lived by alike plundering the king and the people. As far as it was practicable, he endeavoured to put the State upon the footing of a great mercantile establishment, and instead of giving himself up to men making advances to the government on the revenues of the country, and paying themselves by assignments on particular branches of those revenues, his economy and foresight soon enabled him to dispense with all such advances, and to carry on the receipt more as a master dealing with his clerks. Although he could not, it is true, do this in all instances, yet such, there can be no doubt, was his general design; and had the country remained at peace, there is every reason to believe that a complete and perfect system would have been effected accordingly.

In the mean time, however, while labouring for this purpose, and day by day simplifying more and more every arrangement in his own department, Colbert performed a great financial operation which relieved France from a burden that sorely oppressed her. During the troubles and difficulties which had affected the country under Mazarin, a number of funds, called *rentes*, had been created for the purpose of meeting the temporary difficulties ; and in almost all instances the purchasers, who were neither more nor less than public money-lenders at an usurious interest, had acquired these *rentes* or annuities by the payment of a sum very far below the nominal price. Colbert now determined to pay off these *rentes*, not indeed at the high price to which the rising credit of the country had carried them, but at the price of their original purchase. This he effected, though not without very great murmurs on the part of all who were connected with the fundholder, and the sum of eight millions of the public debt was thus got rid of, with some breach of public honour, it is true, but no breach of substantial justice.

It cannot be denied that in this instance, as in several others, Colbert bowed the laws of the land to suit his purposes; and if prescription could ever give real strength to despotism, would have afforded the force of repeated and successful precedents to some of the most dangerous encroachments of Louis on the liberty of his people. But, even while granting

this, and while admitting that the genius of Colbert might well have perceived that the laws which he pretended to reform were but a mere name so long as the will of one man could change them at his pleasure or overstep them for his convenience, we must still remember first that the despotic power of Louis was by this time fully admitted and even rejoiced in by the great mass of his subjects, and that in all those instances in which the minister employed the tyrannical means at his sovereign's disposal, he did employ them (setting aside the terrible exception of Fouquet) for the purposes of substantial justice, and for the good of the people in general.

Thus, though he used various methods which will not bear examination, and of which intimidation was one, to free the country from the burden of the *rentes*, yet he attacked only those which had been acquired unjustly or with circumstances of fraud. The wide-spreading views of the minister, however, went far beyond the mere collection of the revenue of the country, or the mere introduction of economy into the expenditure of the State. He took a far wider, a far deeper, a far more philosophic view; a view which no minister understood in his day, and which no one has fully taken since. The prosperity of the government, he saw, must be founded upon the prosperity of the country; and he knew that its prosperity was not alone to be procured by decreasing the burdens of the people, by dimi-

nishing the expenses of the State, or by preventing anything like corruption and peculation in the various branches of administration. Those were objects of importance indeed, viewed by themselves ; but they were as nothing when compared with the vast and mighty means of producing general prosperity by stimulating, leading, urging on the people to the exertion of every mental and corporeal power in every branch of art and industry. The view of Colbert embraced all : he looked upon the vast kingdom whose resources were placed in his hands, —he looked upon it, with its population, its power, its energies, and its productions, as a farm under the superintendence of an active and diligent steward : he felt himself bound to cultivate every inch of the soil, and not to neglect any one field because the earth thereof was different from another ; if it would not grow corn, it would grow grass ; and Colbert resolved that there should be no weeds where his eye fell.

With the arts and sciences in general he might be said to be unacquainted, so little was the personal knowledge he possessed thereof ; but, nevertheless, he was fully convinced of their utility in a State, and prepared to cultivate them by every means in his power. Agriculture attracted his attention from the very first, and he exerted all his energies for the purpose of promoting a branch of industry which is the great foundation of all others. Neither were manufactures neglected, nor commerce

forgotten ; and we shall labour to trace succinctly his different efforts for leading on human exertion in these four different paths till the war between France and Spain, which recommenced in 1667, deranged or interrupted many of his best schemes.

We must always bear in mind, throughout the details that we are about to give, that Colbert took no narrow or limited view, laboured in his country's service with no partial endeavour ; that he considered the welfare of the State as a whole,—comprehended, examined, determined, and executed all that he undertook, only as parts of one vast and general design, without forgetting any of the other parts. It was not at the expense of manufactures that he sought to benefit agriculture, nor did he neglect commerce to promote either of the other branches of industry ; the ornamental and the useful arts occupied his attention alike, and every detail was but considered in reference to the grand comprehensive purpose of restoring prosperity to France.

The diminution of the taxes called *tailles* was in itself a very vast benefit to the agriculturists of France ; but Colbert proceeded to give them greater encouragement, and as the population, by the effects of civil and foreign wars, not alone in destroying man, but also by preventing his increase, was excessively scanty in France in proportion to the soil to be cultivated, every inducement was held out to the agricultural part of the people to marry early. Every parent amongst the class subjected

to the *taille* who had ten children living was exempted from all taxes ; and by a number of edicts which were promulgated towards 1666 and 1667, rewards and immunities were held out to all persons who married before a certain age, or whose household presented a certain number of children. His efforts in these respects seem to have been misconstrued by others, or at least to have led to a different conclusion from that at which, in all probability, he had arrived himself. It was indeed a maxim of Colbert's, that the real riches of a nation consisted in its numbers ; but it is not to be supposed that one who saw so deeply, and took so wide a view of every subject he regarded, should wish to render a rule general that was only applicable to particular circumstances. That which was wise and prudent in the situation of France at that time, might become rash and destructive to France or any other country in a different situation. The benefits of a numerous population must always be contingent upon the circumstances of the country it possesses ; and no one can believe that Colbert, had he lived to after ages, would have been inclined to apply to England, hemmed in by seas, the same rule that might suit America, with a yet unlaboured world around her.

Without tracing farther the efforts that he made in favour of agriculture, it may be only necessary to state the result. For many years France had drawn a great part of her supplies from foreign

countries, especially the salt provisions sent out to the colonies; but when a company of English merchants proposed in 1667 to supply by a favourable contract whatever cattle and salt meat might be wanted in France, Colbert showed them that, instead of there being any deficiency, France possessed a superfluity to dispose of to foreign countries.

His labours for the promotion of commerce must be entered upon more in detail; although for some years he did not possess the command of the marine, which was of course of great importance to the fulfilment of his views. Under the iron and war-like rule of Richelieu, throughout the turbulent period of the Fronde, and during the corrupt government of Mazarin, commerce had been absolutely neglected by the ministers, and had been almost forgotten by the people. We find scarcely a town upon the coast of France carrying on any great trade with other countries; and though Brest, St. Malo, and Nantes, existed upon the British Channel, a port was still wanting to receive the commerce of the North.

During the latter years of his administration, Fouquet had felt the necessity of making some exertions to revive the external trade of the country; and it would seem that vague but magnificent schemes for forming a great commercial port of Belleisle had presented themselves to his imagination.

No sooner had the management of the finances fallen into the hands of Colbert, than he also saw the necessity of establishing a port upon the northern coast, in order to render really effectual those commercial alliances with the maritime powers which he was anxiously endeavouring to effect ; but instead of labouring to create a port where none existed, Colbert cast his eyes upon Dunkirk, which had been given up to England by Mazarin as part of the price of Cromwell's military assistance.

The French minister well knew the character of the English monarch, and judged that Dunkirk might be obtained upon easier terms than those implied by a war between France and England. The attempt, indeed, to induce the British sovereign to give up his hold upon that important port was bold and difficult ; but the vices and necessities of Charles II. offered to the French minister various means of effecting his object, which he did not fail to employ to the best advantage. The expense of keeping up Dunkirk was considerable, and we learn from the despatch of the Count D'Estrades on the 17th of August 1662, that Cromwell himself had entertained some idea of disposing of that city to the King of France. Charles II, however, was in far greater need of money than the Protector had ever been ; and Louis, it would seem, lost no opportunity of increasing his need. The creditors of the English king were instigated to press him for payment ; his passion for expensive gratifications

was stimulated by every allurement; and Charles was easily tempted to enter into negotiations for the sale of Dunkirk to France.

The Count D'Estrades appeared in the affair upon the part of the King of France; and the whole was carried on with great secrecy for some time. A rumour, however, of the King's intention having got abroad in England, the people murmured violently, and tumults took place in London, which brought the facts to the knowledge of other powers.

Holland and Spain, each jealous of the increasing power of France, interfered to prevent an event from taking place which must add greatly to the preponderance of that power, and each feeling the importance of Dunkirk to the Low Countries, offered to purchase it from the King of England.

To the Dutch Charles would not listen, having still many a difficult question to settle with that people; the Spaniards had nothing but promises to give; and the careful minister of the French king was known to have the purchase-money ready. The offers of the other powers, however, were used to augment the price of the city, and the demands of the English ministers continued exorbitant, till Louis affected to be indifferent upon the subject, and commanded D'Estrades to withdraw from the court of England.

The French monarch seemed quite to have forgotten the matter, and the Count was ordered to proceed to Holland in order both to conclude some

negotiations which were still pending, and to frustrate the intrigues carried on by Spain through the instrumentality of Don Estevan de Gamarra. At Calais, however, D'Estrades was met by letters from the King of England,* begging him to visit London before he went on to Holland; and, with the ready consent of Louis, he proceeded to the British metropolis.

The subject of the sale of Dunkirk was immediately opened between the French ambassador and

* The correspondence which begins at Calais between D'Estrades, Clarendon, Charles II, and Louis XIV, would lead one to imagine that the matter of the sale of Dunkirk had never been agitated before. It is taken up quite as a new question; Louis is surprised, or affects to be surprised, at the King of England's application to his ambassador, and writes even to D'Estrades himself as if he were ignorant of Char!~s's object and anxious to ascertain it. Thus, everything would lead us to imagine that the business was either commenced at that epoch, or that Louis had previously completely given up all idea of obtaining Dunkirk, did not the very first despatch of D'Estrades, from London, dated the 17th of August 1662, at once open upon the subject of the restoration of Dunkirk to the crown of France without any previous explanation or introductory matter whatsoever, referring to former offers made upon the subject, and showing clearly that the last letter of Louis to his ambassador was intended for public display, while the subject had been fully discussed between D'Estrades and his master, and the ambassador had received private instructions for the regulation of his whole conduct. It is a singular fact, that the Lord Chancellor Clarendon, although so long an exile from his native country, was unable to speak French, with such a degree of facility, at least, as to enable him to converse with the French ambassador without the aid of an interpreter; but this fact would appear to be proved by all the letters of D'Estrades.

the English ministers. Both the pride and the interests of the British nation were opposed to the cession of Dunkirk to France, especially at a moment when France and Holland were engaged in a treaty of alliance, and England was upon the eve of a war with the latter country. But the necessities of Charles overstepped all considerations of national dignity and policy, and it was agreed that Dunkirk was to be ceded for a sum which, after much discussion, was fixed at 5,000,000 of livres. The people of England, from the highest to the lowest, were opposed to the proceedings of the King and of Clarendon, who supported the interests of the King of France with a very doubtful degree of patriotism; but, notwithstanding all the efforts made to prevent the cession taking place, the treaty was signed and ratified, and D'Estrades, hastening over, took possession of that strong city with all the artillery and ammunition which it contained.

In the mean while, Colbert had negotiated a commercial treaty with Holland, consisting of fifty-two articles, which was as strongly opposed by England as the cession of Dunkirk had been by the Dutch republic. The treaty was not absolutely signed when that cession took place ; and the States whose eyes were now opened to the views of France upon the commerce of the North, threatened and remonstrated, declared that the possession of Dunkirk by France would annihilate the trade upon which they depended, proposed a commercial treaty

with England, and even with Spain, and threatened not to sign the treaty which was pending between themselves and France. The attitude that Holland assumed was so warlike, and the tone that she used so peremptory, that it seemed as if the administration of Colbert, which was most pacific in its general character, must have begun by war.

D'Estrades, however, was commanded to proceed into the Low Countries, and do all that he could to pacify the States. He himself, indeed, suggested to Louis a political stroke which would have accorded much better with the policy which the French monarch afterwards pursued under the rash instigations of Louvois than with the views which he entertained at the opening of his reign under the wise counsels of Colbert. D'Estrades represented to him that Antwerp, and a number of the other towns on the coast of Flanders, seeing Dunkirk given up to France by England, were not only ready, but anxious to cast themselves into his hands, and that his presence in that part of the world with but a very small force would put at his disposal one of the most important tracts of sea-coast and several of the strongest and most wealthy ports in the world.

Colbert, however, opposed in the strongest manner an attempt which must instantly have brought on a general war, where all the powers of Europe would be united by their best interests against the King of France, and supported by popular enthusiasm.

The King, therefore, abstained from following the tempting suggestion of D'Estrades, and directed his whole efforts to cement firmly the alliance between France and Holland, and to remove any irritation from the minds of the States.

In pursuing his instructions for this purpose, D'Estrades found a zealous co-operator in the celebrated pensionary De Witt; who, though he had shown his determination to oppose unjust encroachments on the part of France, had argued strongly against any effort to prevent that country from completing a transaction in which the States of Holland had no right to interfere, or to resent an act which they could in no degree impede. By his exertions the irritation of the Dutch was removed, their eyes were opened to a better view of their own interests, and they were taught, though only in a degree, to perceive that France might take a part in the commerce of the world without injuring them, and that it is by no means a necessary consequence of the advance of commercial prosperity in any one State, that other trading countries should be proportionate losers. At all events, they became fully convinced of the impolicy of bringing on a war with France, and the commercial treaty was accordingly signed.

This having been accomplished, Colbert applied himself to promote in France itself that commercial spirit without which the openings that he had created for it could of course be of no avail. The

spirit of enterprise had never been wanting in the French nation; but the endeavours of the great minister were exerted to direct that spirit in a beneficial channel, instead of suffering it to waste itself in the dangerous and pernicious course either of internal faction or of external warfare.

A preceding minister, the Cardinal de Richelieu, had seen the absolute necessity of commercial institutions for the promotion of anything like general prosperity in a country possessing such a vast extent of sea-coast and such great internal resources as France. Contending with factions, and harassed by civil wars, Richelieu had but little opportunity of following out even his own views in these respects: he had, however, established a company for the purpose of trading to the East Indies; some territories were acquired in the East, and the company enjoyed a short season of prosperity. Even before Richelieu's death, however, it was beginning to fall, and in the wars of the Fronde and the disturbances of the Regency it sunk entirely; the possessions which it had acquired in India were sold to the Knights of Malta, and the company was dissolved. Colbert, however, resolved, upon its ruins and under its name, to found another and far more important institution.

In the course of the years 1663 and 1664, Colbert conceived and drew up the project of two great trading companies, the one destined to act in the East and the other in the West Indies. A great

difficulty, however, lay in the way of the general advancement and success of these companies. An old-established prejudice, confirmed by law and custom, rendered commerce abhorrent to the French people. Commerce, one of the great sources of a nation's wealth and honour, was, by the most unjust and absurd of notions, considered absolutely degrading to those who practised it. A noble, or one of the manifold scions of noble houses, who had become as much multiplied in France as the sands of the sea, might beg or steal, or cheat, or perform any of the offices which the ancients placed under the superintendence of their god Mercury, without derogating from the rank which he received from his ancestors ; but if he meddled with commerce, though on the grandest scale and of the most ennobling kind, he derogated from his nobility, and the beggar was no longer a gentleman. The evils of this prejudice even went farther than the class which it immediately affected : it cast a stigma upon commerce altogether,—it rendered it contemptible in the eyes of the people— it weighed down its exertions under a load of scorn.

Colbert, whose insight into the springs of human action and penetration into the minute points of policy were as clear as his general views were vast and comprehensive, applied himself in the very first instance to remove the prejudices which impeded his purposes. By his advice, the King was induced to declare, that all persons might enter into the com-

panies of the Indies without in the slightest degree derogating from their nobility. He himself led the way; and the monarch and his minister, both understanding the character of the people to be ruled, applied themselves to make that institution which was intended for the solid benefit of the whole people a matter of fashionable speculation at the court. As liberal, when it was necessary, as economical and even parsimonious where liberality was not required, Colbert advised the King to endow the companies of the Indies with large sums from the treasury of the State: the queen, the princes, and the courtiers followed the example of the king; two millions of livres were subscribed at the court, two millions more by the different agents of finance, two millions more by the courts of law and the body of merchants, and a loan of six millions without interest was made by the king to support the companies on their first outset.

Twelve millions were thus at once furnished to the companies of the Indies,—a sum which four years before could not have been procured in Paris in the utmost exigency of the State. But that which was most admirable and most remarkable was, to find the king, the princes, the nobles, the lawyers, the merchants, and the tradesmen of France all standing side by side as partners in a great trading company, as members in this states-general of commerce. All the transactions of the companies were carried on by their own directors; but there

can be no doubt that impulses were continually given to them by Colbert himself, and immense exertions were immediately made to turn the great resources of the two companies to advantage.

The Indian possessions of the ancient company established by Richelieu were repurchased from the Knights of Malta ; and many others were added, amongst which were Guadaloupe, Martinique, and several other islands. Colonization to a very great extent went on hand in hand with all these efforts ; and while an expedition from Rochelle settled at Cayenne, another band of settlers took possession of the vast, productive, and interesting State of Lower Canada, and the foundations of Quebec were laid upon the banks of the St. Lawrence. At the same time, every effort was made to encourage general commerce, distinct from the impulsion given by these great companies ; and, to revive various species of trade which had almost entirely ceased, premiums were given both upon exportation and importation, which at one time amounted to thirty francs per ton upon the first, and forty francs per ton upon the second.

During the civil wars, ship-building had almost become an unknown art in the ports of France ; and even the monarch had often had recourse to the purchase of ships from other nations. Colbert, however, applied himself to remedy this ; and though we shall have hereafter to notice his labours when at the head of the marine department of the

administration, we must not omit to mention here that rewards of five francs per ton were granted for every ship built in a French port.

While writing upon this subject, we may add—though it took place at a later period—to the number of Colbert's efforts in favour of commerce, which we have mentioned, the establishment of a general assurance society in Paris. From the first spring of commerce under Louis XIV. assurance societies had been instituted in the different sea-ports by the merchants themselves; but Colbert perceived very great advantages from the establishment of a central chamber in Paris, which might give more consistency, vigour, and confidence to the system, even while the inferior companies were suffered to pursue their own course in the provinces.

While thus zealously exerting the powers of his great mind to raise up, support, and direct a spirit of commercial enterprise in France, Colbert was labouring with equal zeal in favour of a neighbouring branch of industry—that of manufacture. No country, perhaps, in the world ever afforded greater facilities for various kinds of manufactures than France: blessed with a rich and productive soil, which affords nourishment to the artisan at an easy rate, intersected by numerous rivers and frequent streams, producing almost all the articles required in the various manufactures of Europe—rich dyes, fine earths, various species of mineral, wool of a tolerable degree of fineness, a certain portion of

silk, and possessing, above all, that infinite variety of climate and soil in its different provinces which is the most favourable circumstance for the development of all kinds of industry, she only required the encouragement of an open market and the opportunity of peace. During long wars, however, under the rule of bad and ambitious ministers, and during the struggles of factious and interested nobles, the various productive arts had fallen into decay, and no more was brought forth by the artisan than was absolutely necessary for his own support.

At the period of the wars of the League, traders could not proceed from one town to another except in large armed bands; and in the times of the Fronde it was little better; so that when Colbert commenced his efforts in France, there was scarcely a manufactory of any great importance existing throughout the country. It had been said at a former period, that the wool of England and the looms of Flanders clothed the world, and as yet France had made very little progress in the fabrication of cloths. Even those manufactories which did exist had fallen into decay; so that scarcely anything was produced in France except the coarse cloth that clothed the peasantry. This species of industry Colbert immediately proceeded to raise up from the state of depression into which it had fallen. The decayed cloth manufactory of Sedan and a fabric of tapestries at Aubusson received his first atten-

tion, and were encouraged and re-established. The manufacturers, nearly in a state of ruin, could do little to extend their business without assistance; but Colbert met their representations at once by offering to advance 2,000 livres, without interest, from the revenues of the State upon every working-loom. The very first exertions made by the manufacturers themselves were not only rewarded by their success, but by the government, the attention of which was turned in every direction for the purpose of seeking out merit and ensuring its encouragement.

The manufacture of tapestry and of carpets was not neglected; the tapestry of Beauvais soon equalled that of Arras, and in the former city, where scarcely an artisan could have found work before Colbert took the administration of the finances into his own hand, one manufactory alone employed six hundred workmen ere he had been in power ten years. The carpet-work of La Savonnerie succeeded in imitating the Persian and Turkey carpets to a very great degree of nicety; and an immense number of hands which would otherwise have remained idle were employed in similar establishments throughout the rest of France. The chief establishment of the kind, however, was the manufactory of the Gobelins, a large building situate upon the banks of the little river Bièvre, the waters of which were becoming famous for the production of a peculiarly fine scarlet dye. The building itself had

been used for a variety of purposes, and had served even for barracks to part of the troops of Condé. Here, however, was now established, under the auspices of Colbert, a manufactory of tapestry, which, guided by the skill and taste of the famous painter Le Brun, soon excelled everything of the same kind that the world had produced before. It also served to employ more than eight hundred artisans, three hundred of whom resided in the building ; and this was one of the great objects which Colbert constantly had in view.

The fabrication of mirrors had hitherto been almost entirely confined to Venice ; and, at all events, those produced in other countries had always been of a very inferior description. Colbert resolved, however, that the manufacture of an article so much in request in France, should no longer be confined to Italy, and a manufactory of mirrors was established in the Fauxbourg St. Antoine, which soon left the Venetian manufactories far behind. Looking-glasses of a far larger size but equal in polish and in colour to those of Venice were produced in Paris, and the purpose of Colbert was answered, both in furnishing the people with a new means of employing their industry, and opening out fresh sources of wealth to his native country.

The art of working tin and of preparing steel, of making porcelain and of tanning the finer kinds of leather, were also introduced and carried to perfection ; and even those mechanical contrivances

which other nations had adopted for the purpose of aiding human strength were eagerly sought for by the great minister, and, where possible, introduced into France. Thus, the secret of the old-fashioned stocking-loom, which, though now superseded by a more powerful and effectual instrument, was then considered as a very fine and ingenious machine, was bought by the comptroller of finance for the benefit of his native country.

Such were some of the efforts of the minister for the promotion of manufactures in France; and he and Louis zealously applied themselves to improve the means of communication between one part of the country and the other, thus taking the surest step for facilitating the march of internal commerce through the land. The roads were improved, a better system of forming them introduced, and proper funds for maintaining them in good order were appointed. The greatest, however, of the efforts made for this purpose became apparent in the construction of the famous canal of Languedoc. The idea of that magnificent work was not indeed originated either by Colbert or Louis XIV, nor even in the age in which they lived; but its immediate adoption and execution add to the honour both of the king and of the statesman.

The narrowness of the isthmus which attaches the Spanish peninsula to France, and the facilities which the Garonne affords for constructing a canal

between the Bay of Biscay and the Gulf of Lyons, had attracted the attention of engineers several times before; and during the life of Richelieu it was long under consideration. Embarrassed with wars and straitened in matters of finance, Richelieu was unable to carry so great an enterprise as the construction of a canal between the two seas into execution, and the project was cast aside and nearly forgotten. One man, however, never forgot it; and though he did not press it upon a government that was evidently unable to execute it, he devoted a great part of his time and attention to those preliminary researches which might ensure its adoption at a more happy period. He travelled from town to town and province to province in the course that was to be taken by the projected canal; he measured the distances, he calculated the heights of mountains, he ascertained the character of the soil, he traced the direction and computed the volume of the streams which flow from the Pyrenees, he constructed plans, he drew up new projects, and as soon as the dawn of the personal reign of Louis XIV. gave promise of that energetic spirit of enterprise which distinguished that monarch's career, he hastened to Paris in order to propose his favourite scheme to the government. Everything was favourable to it: order and abundance had been restored to the finances; peace reigned throughout

Europe; at the head of the most important branch of the administration was a minister of a comprehensive mind, and an indefatigable activity in promoting everything useful and great; and on the throne was a young monarch panting for every kind of distinction.

Such was the state of things when Pierre Paul Riquet, *Baillier de Bonrepos*, a native of Bezières, arrived in Paris and laid before Colbert all the papers which he had been so many years in preparing. The first consideration given to the subject by the minister was in 1663; and he at once saw the feasibility of Riquet's plan; and determined to adopt it. The king, too, joined eagerly to promote it; but neither Colbert nor his master hurried on with that careless rapidity which is always the characteristic of a weak mind labouring under a project too vast for its powers.

During a great part of 1664, Andréossy was employed in gathering together every new view, every minute detail, every hint or suggestion that might bear upon the subject, and the whole was laid before the monarch and his minister. When every consideration had been given to the subject, and regular plans and definite purposes had been gained, the construction of the canal was commenced, and went on with increasing activity to its conclusion. Although it was not absolutely completed till after the period to which we have

sought to confine ourselves in this chapter, it may be necessary to conclude the subject here by a brief sketch of the undertaking.

A tract of sixty-two leagues, extending from the Garonne below Toulouse to the Salt Lagune of Thau near Agde on the Mediterranean, was marked out for the line of the canal, after the most mature consideration of every step in that long course of works. The cutting of the canal itself was, of course, a business of great labour in a country where the soil was constantly varying, and the inequalities of the ground offered impediments at every step; considerable hills were levelled in many places, the solid rock was obliged to be cut through, and in others an artificial bed was formed where the soil was of a loose and shifting character. The width of the canal, its turns amongst the hills, and the character of the country through which it passed, required locks, tunnels, aqueducts, basins, and sluices of a peculiar construction, at each particular part of its course; and everything that the art of engineering in that age could produce was done to complete this great undertaking.

The two greatest enterprises connected therewith, however, are the two vast reservoirs which were formed for the purpose of supplying the canal with abundance of water at a point where there would otherwise have been a deficiency. In the neighbourhood of St. Ferréole, high up in the mountain-passes, above Castel-Naudry, an arti-

ficial lake was formed by traversing the valley by a dyke of four hundred and twenty toises in length, and twenty-five toises in height. The reservoir thus formed gives an extent of twelve hundred toises long, five hundred wide, and twenty deep, and contains twenty-seven millions of the French cubic mètres. Across this dyke runs an aqueduct which carries the water down to the second reservoir at Nauouse, which is two hundred toises in length by one hundred and fifty in width ; from this, the highest point to which the canal is carried between the two seas, the waters collected at St. Ferréole are poured into the channel. Sixty-two sluices, seventy-two bridges, fifty-five aqueducts, have been required to complete this magnificent work ; and yet with such skill and such economy was it executed, that while the splendid nothing called Versailles has been in all ages accused, whether justly or unjustly, of exhausting the treasury of France and impoverishing the people, the construction of this most magnificent and beneficial work was hardly felt by the French nation, except from its commercial utility.

It would require a long and elaborate disquisition, and that not of a very useful character, to ascertain the share which Colbert took in all the great efforts made for the promotion of agriculture, commerce, and manufacture, and the share which is attributabé to Louis XIV. himself. That high honour was due to each there can be no doubt ;

and such would still be the case, even if the monarch had done no more than approve and zealously co-operate in effecting the great designs originating with his minister.

In many instances, however, we have very strong proof of Louis having originated many of these enterprises himself; and as an instance may be given the great improvement that took place in the roads and in travelling, which we have already mentioned, and which first suggested itself to the monarch's own mind on the occasion of one of his messengers to England being long delayed by the bad state of the roads. He notices the fact himself in a letter to his ambassador at the court of London, and intimates his intention of immediately working a thorough change not only in the roads, but in the whole system of travelling.

Having made all those exertions in favour of the useful arts of which we have given a short and imperfect sketch, many persons, on whom we in the present day are contented to bestow the name of great statesmen, would think that they had done enough, and would sit down satisfied without making any exertion to stimulate, to guide, and to encourage the mind of man to employ its energies in intellectual pursuits, or to produce those things which tend not so much to support as to adorn and beautify existence. Colbert, however, thought differently, and acted regularly with Louis, who justly conceived that it was part of the duty of a great

monarch and a great man not to leave literature, science, and the elegant arts to force their way alone through the difficulties and over the obstacles which impede them amongst the contending passions, interests, and prejudices of mankind ; but, on the contrary, to give those pursuits which are as much nobler than the mere productive arts as mind is superior to body, at least the same degree of encouragement and support that he afforded to those efforts which tend alone to man's corporal advantage.

We have already noticed briefly the state of literature and science at the moment when Louis XIV. took into his own hands the reins of government. Letters had indeed made considerable progress ; but the purpose of the king and the minister seems to have been to give to every exertion of man's powers a fair field and an open course, and to afford in all instances to a well-directed spirit of enterprise the encouragement of certain reward.

Early in the year 1663, the first project was formed of the Académie des Inscriptions et des Belles Lettres. The Académie Française had been founded long before ; and the Académie des Inscriptions was instituted “ for the purpose,” as I find it explained in an old work upon the subject, “ of composing inscriptions, devices, and medals, which might refer to the king in particular, and to the nation in general ; and, moreover, for the purpose of finding the means of reviving good taste and noble

simplicity in the literary monuments which might be raised in future."

Though this object was in some degree limited, the exertions of the members of the new Academy soon went far beyond the views first presented to them. The history of their country became one of their principal studies, and the preservation of historical truths one of the chief purposes they proposed to themselves. Their proceedings, indeed, commenced with the composition of a splendid series of medals, and under their care the numismatic art was carried to a very high degree of perfection; but, at the same time, the ascertaining of positive facts, in order to afford a basis for correct reasoning in all historical questions, was one of the principal objects of the Académie des Inscriptions, and by its researches in this field it has conferred a great benefit not only upon France, but upon the world.

The establishment of this society was followed in the year 1666 by the institution of the Académie des Sciences, the name of which explains its purpose. Previous to its foundation, scientific knowledge was at the lowest ebb in France; and all was as yet misty and obscure. From time to time, indeed, throughout the lapse of the preceding centuries, a great man would burst forth from the cloud like a flash of lightning, illuminate the world for a moment, and leave all dark when he had passed away; but in the outset of the actual reign of Louis XIV.

few, if any, men of great eminence could be found to compose even the nucleus of a scientific society. Picard, Richer, Duclos, and Lahire are the only names that have descended to the present day; and even those are scarcely known to the world in general. To remedy this deficiency, it was necessary to induce some eminent foreign men of science to take up their abode in France.

The famous Cassini was called from Italy; Huygens was brought from Holland; Römer from Denmark: an observatory* was erected, and apartments in the Louvre were assigned to the Académie des Sciences, where the members met uninterruptedly for many years, and poured forth an immense mass of information upon the world.

Some little time before, Denis de Salo, a counsellor in the parliament of Paris, commenced a publication entitled the *Journal des Savans*; which, though inferior to many that have been produced since, proved of the greatest service to science in general, and both set an example and afforded a model to all that came after in France.

About the same time (1664) an Academy of Painting and Sculpture was either remodelled or founded, and shortly after it was confirmed by letters patent from the king.

* This observatory was originally erected in the Faubourg St. Jaques; and though I have placed it in conjunction with the establishment of the Académie des Sciences, it may be necessary to state that its erection took place some short time before the absolute incorporation of that society.

Mazarin, whose taste for the arts was considerable, had no sooner found himself free from the turbulent assaults of his factious enemies, than he had laboured to introduce into France a love for those refined pleasures which had been but little cultivated in that country, though they had revived, flourished, and decayed in other lands. A number of artists had been called by him to the French capital, and encouragement had been given by him to all who showed any decided taste for either painting or sculpture.

The accusation of favouring his countrymen, which has been urged against almost every foreign minister who has ruled any kingdom of Europe, was in no degree justified by Mazarin's conduct in the present instance; and we might cite the example of Mignard to show how much encouragement the cardinal on all occasions extended to native artists. All the greatest works of the day were entrusted to the hands of Mignard, or Le Brun; and the cupola of the Val-de-Grace, executed by the former, fully justified the taste and judgment of Mazarin.

After his death, Colbert gathered together all the painters and sculptors whom Mazarin had patronized, into a society under the name of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture, and assigned them apartments in the Royal College.* They

* I find it stated in the life of Pierre Mignard, by the Abbé de Monville, that there existed at a much earlier period a Royal

were afterwards, however, by the king's commands removed to the Louvre, where a regular school for the improvement of those two arts was established.

In 1667 these proceedings were followed by a very great and singular institution tending to the same object. Colbert determined that the great advantages to be obtained by young artists from perfect familiarity with the finest antique models, should not be denied to the youth of France, and, by his advice, one of the large mansions of old Rome was purchased by the French monarch. A second Academy was founded in that ancient capital for the benefit of French subjects, and the whole was placed under the care of a general director. All the pupils of the Parisian Academy who had received prizes during the first year of their studies were sent thither, maintained there at the expense of the king, and received the fullest instructions in every branch of their art, surrounded by the choicest models both of painting and sculpture.

An Academy of Architecture also was instituted ; Academy of Painting, &c. of which Le Brun was appointed rector in 1655. We cannot name Mignard without remarking that, though he certainly treated Colbert with much jealous insolence in regard to the favour which he thought was shown to Le Brun, the great minister of Louis XIV. to a certain degree forgot both dignity and justice in the tyrannical threats which he held out towards the artist. The mood was very brief, it is true ; but these and various other points in the conduct of Colbert would seem to prove that the accusation which was brought against him by many of his enemies of yielding to an arbitrary and overbearing disposition, was not without some foundation.

but, alas! the days of Rome and Greece had passed away. The peculiar style of the chivalrous ages, known by the name of Gothic architecture, was also at an end, and an anomalous, heterogeneous, and ungraceful style was all that remained ; in the midst of which, indeed, some better things were produced, which served only to show how completely that magnificent art was lost in France.

At the same time that all these exertions were being made by the King and Colbert for the foundation of permanent institutions which, by the combination of efforts and the perpetuation of great purposes, might carry on uninterrupted the progress of the arts and sciences through a long course of future years, an infinite number of detached acts were performed by Louis, all of which tended more or less to the same great general object. It seemed as if it was the King's peculiar wish to announce to the whole world the esteem and veneration with which he regarded the exercise of the human intellect. Every distinguished man, without solicitation, without effort, obtained from the monarch not only empty smiles, but substantial benefits. Apartments in the Louvre were assigned to every one who could pretend to distinction ; some post of honour and of profit was found for every one who had justly acquired a high name by the exercise of his mental powers ; the instruction given in the University was rendered gratuitous ; large sums were set apart for increasing the Royal Li-

brary ; men of learning and discrimination were sent out to every part of the known world for the purpose of collecting valuable books, manuscripts, and antiques ; and nineteen professorships were founded in the Royal College.

Nor were the arts less regarded ; the famous Le Brun was honoured and courted by the King, and appointed First Painter to Louis, which was then something more than an insignificant title. Le Veau, Mansard, and Perrault received daily distinctions and rewards for their architectural efforts ; and Lulli, placed at the head of the King's musicians, was encouraged to pursue that beautiful science, which was then, as we have said, but in its infancy. Of Lulli's history, however, it may be necessary to speak a word, as it tends to show how talent and genius were constantly sought out by Louis XIV. and those who surrounded him.

Jean Baptiste Lulli, a Florentine, had been a mere servant, we are told, of Mademoiselle de Montpensier. Brought into France in his early life, without knowing a note of music, he used to compose melodies of extreme beauty, and play them on the violin ; which first caused him to be remarked. He found many persons willing to put down for him, in writing, those airs which would soon have been lost if trusted alone to memory, and he thus acquired a name for the beauty of his compositions. Money was furnished to him for the purpose of studying music as a science ; and scarcely

did Louis XIV. find himself free to patronise arts by means of the supplies which the skill and economy of Colbert furnished, than he named Lulli superintendent of the music of his household, and from that moment a new epoch took place in the science of composition in France.

In order to increase his immediate influence in various branches of art, Colbert purchased in January 1664 the office of superintendent of the royal buildings, for which he gave the sum of two hundred thousand livres to Ratabon, who had previously held it. A speedy change was perceptible in the city of Paris, which had previously displayed nothing but a confused mass of buildings, the beauties of not one of which could be distinguished on account of the crowded groups into which they were gathered.

The narrow street which separated the palace of the Tuileries from its own gardens was now swept away, that great building left open, and the long range of dirty houses which joined the royal residence and ran along between the garden and the river was removed, while the quay was greatly widened and beautified. The terrace, still so remarkable, was constructed, flanking the gardens on the water-side ; and fountains, basins, statues, and other ornaments were brought to adorn the place according to the taste of the day.

The buildings of the Louvre had been left for many years in a very incomplete state ; and

as the fame of the famous Bernini was then at its height, he was called from Italy to direct the works going on for the completion of that palace. Before he arrived, however, two French architects had given in plans which were equal, if not superior, to anything the Italian could produce. The first of these architects was François Mansard, who had risen from the rank of a common artisan. While yet a simple mason, we are told, he had been employed to build a house for the President De Maisons ; and, to the surprise of every one, produced the famous Château De Maisons, one of the most splendid buildings which had yet been erected in France. He was now called upon to give in plans for finishing the Louvre ; and they would undoubtedly have been accepted, but for the extraordinary modesty of Mansard, who would not undertake the work unless he were permitted to pull down and rebuild everything which seemed to him amiss when he had done it. This might have entailed so enormous an expense upon the country, that Colbert would not consent ; and the plans of the second whom we have mentioned were adopted.

This was Claude Perrault,* who had been educated as a physician, and had acquired considerable fame on account of his anatomical knowledge. He never practised his profession, however, except in favour of his friends, but devoted himself to the

* Henault says Charles Perrault; but this is evidently a mistake.

study of various branches of mechanics, and became justly celebrated as an architect, notwithstanding the bitter jibes of Boileau. He was brother to Charles Perrault, comptroller-general of public buildings under Colbert, and his plans met with favourable notice from the minister. They were not executed without great opposition, but were at length completed, with the assistance of Charles Perrault, and Le Brun the painter; and Bernini, though brought at a great expense from Italy, and splendidly rewarded for his journey, did but little to embellish the French metropolis, or to add to his own fame.

Nor was the erection of splendid buildings, nor the clearing away of some of the dark and narrow streets which deformed Paris, the only efforts made by Louis XIV. and his minister for the improvement of the capital: almost the whole of the town was repaved and lighted, and regulations were made for the daily removal of those accumulations of filth which had hitherto rendered the streets foul and disgusting.

Assassinations, robberies, and various acts of violence had been at all times common in different parts of the metropolis; and the municipal police, as it had existed up to the period of Mazarin's death, had been quite incompetent to the maintenance of peace and safety in the streets. The whole system of the watch was reorganised, and instead of a few impotent old men, armed with hal-

bergs which they could scarcely wield, a regular police force of horse and foot was established, which produced as great, or, perhaps, a greater degree of security than existed at that time in any other capital in Europe.

We have spoken above of the desire which Louis seemed to entertain not only to promote literary and scientific pursuits in France, but to display that respect and admiration for genius in general which was sure to have the most beneficial effect in impelling all men to exert their power to the utmost. The strongest proof of this purpose is the liberality which he displayed towards distinguished foreigners, without exacting from them any service whatsoever. Many eminent literary and scientific men, in various quarters of Europe, who only knew the name of Louis XIV. as that of a young and graceful sovereign lately placed upon the throne of France, were surprised at receiving from him gifts not unworthy of his high station to bestow, accompanied by a letter pointing out distinctly the acts or qualities which called forth such a token of the monarch's admiration. There might be ostentation in the act, and vanity in the object; but the ostentation was of a noble and a benevolent kind, and it would be happy for Europe if the vanity of all its princes took the same course.

There remained yet one great undertaking to be performed, one more beneficial change to be effected, which—after the hand of Louis and his great

minister had raised up agriculture and commerce from the state of depression into which they had been thrown, had introduced various new sorts of manufactures, had brought back old ones which had been lost, and had bestowed splendid encouragement upon literature, science, and the elegant arts,—called for even deeper and more searching attention than the great objects which had gone before. This was the reform of the civil and criminal law of the country; and it was immediately undertaken. It was now proposed to divide the matter into three, if not four great sections; to consider the mere civil law as apart from the commercial law, and the criminal law as distinct from both. A council was composed expressly for this purpose, the president of which was the Maréchal de Villeroi: to him were joined the clear and equitable Ormesson, Boucherat, Pussort, a near relation of Colbert, Talon, Bignon, Lamoignon, and a number of others, of whom Colbert himself was one. The principal members of this council were jurisconsults of the highest reputation; and the appearance on the list of the name of Ormesson, who had so strongly and nobly opposed Colbert himself in regard to Fouquet, is the highest testimony to the equity of the minister on the present occasion.

The sittings of this council commenced on the 28th of October 1666; and they continued always once a week, but generally far more frequently,

till the 10th of February 1667, when the famous *Ordonnance Civile* appeared, creating a great and beneficial change in the whole body of the civil law of France.

Many imperfections undoubtedly still remained; but that which was effected was quite sufficient to show that infinite zeal, talent, learning, wisdom, and determination had been exerted to do away an immense mass of abuses and absurdities which had been accumulating during many ages.*

* The opinion of Condorcet upon these codes would seem somewhat harshly formed, and without as much consideration of the times and circumstances in which they were drawn up as we might have expected from that clear and philosophical writer. "All these codes," he says, "are monuments of the ignorance in which France and all Europe, with the exception of England, were plunged in regard to those objects which most interest mankind. Pussort, so much praised by Boileau, had no other merit than that of being the relation of Colbert, and of having displayed as much barbarity as meanness in the affair of Fouquet. The criminal code is a proof of the contempt which men who believe themselves above the law dare sometimes display for the people," &c. &c.

Such are the comments of Condorcet at a period when every feeling had changed throughout the whole fabric of society; and his judgment was undoubtedly formed too abstractedly. He looked upon these codes without reference to the times, the circumstances, or the antecedent state of the country; and he condemned the jurists who compiled them for what they did not do, when he might have honoured them for what they did. Any man who produces a clear and ascertained reform of any abuse is a benefactor to his country, even though he leaves much to be done by those who come after. Perhaps it may appear paradoxical to doubt whether he does not confer a greater benefit by leaving something to be done, than if he did all at once; and yet I am inclined to think he does.

The criminal code did not appear till 1670; though an ordonnance affecting the marine had been promulgated in the preceding year. The regulation of the commercial laws followed still more slowly; but by that time France was engaged, as we shall show hereafter, in ruinous and expensive wars, which not only crippled the efforts of the minister, but diverted his exertions to other and less beneficial objects.

While speaking on this reform of the laws, we cannot omit to notice, ere we drop the subject, one or two other ameliorations effected by Louis and Colbert. We have stated that almost all the offices of the state, but more especially those which implied judicial functions, had been rendered venal long before. A new corruption had grown out of this corruption, and the prices demanded and given for various posts, especially in the parliament, had become exorbitant in the highest degree: 1,800,000 francs had at one time been offered to Fouquet for his office of procureur-général; which, calculating the difference of prices, and the changes which have since been effected in the currency of France, would amount to nearly 150,000*l.* This abuse speedily attracted the attention of Louis, and in 1665 he fixed a given price to all judicial offices.

A second extraordinary abuse which had taken place, sprang out of the iniquitous distinction of the different classes in France. The nobles, forming the privileged class, were exempted from the

direct taxes, called *tailles*; and during the period of the civil war, a multitude of persons in every part of the country, but especially in the remote provinces, had assumed on various pretexts titles of nobility, had obtained by various means a recognition of their exemption, and thus not only defrauded the State, but caused the burden of the taxes to press more heavily upon those who were already overloaded. To remedy this evil, chambers of inquiry were established in different parts of the country to investigate all doubtful claims to exemption, and, as an old French writer emphatically terms it, "to purge the provinces of false nobility."

Neither Colbert nor Louis perceived that every system of law dependent upon the will of any single individual has in itself the seeds of imperfection and injustice: neither of them understood that justice is immutable, and law only a means of arriving at justice: neither of them saw that the evils arising out of iniquitous immunities were only to be done away by putting an end to those immunities themselves. But it would be too much to expect that Colbert and Louis, in the seventeenth century, should divine facts that are but dimly seen in the nineteenth, even had there not been a thousand accessory circumstances to blind their eyes and fetter their free judgment.

A third abuse was found in the existence of a multitude of tribunals, independent of each other, and in the excessive expenses attendant upon all

causes in the courts. An ordonnance was promulgated in 1673, the object of which was to regulate the expenses of suits at law; and though this was not and could not be very effectual, the removal of the local jurisdictions did far more.

One of the last vestiges of the feudal system attributed to different noblemen, lay and ecclesiastic, was the right of administering justice within certain limits. The Archbishop of Paris had still his bailiff, and his officers of justice sitting at Fort l'Evêque; the Abbot of St. Germain had a court in his abbey, and the Grand Prior administered justice within the pale of the Temple; the Abbess of Montmartre also had a very extensive jurisdiction: and the existence of these tribunals gave rise to the greatest evils. The space over which the authority of each extended was a question of continual difficulty; constant disputes regarding their respective rights were taking place; causes were transferred from one court to another incessantly, and constant appeals were made to other tribunals. Nor was this the utmost extent of the evil: the judges appointed in these courts were men of little legal knowledge, and too frequently of no very tried degree of probity; the will of the lord who appointed them formed an argument of great weight in all their decisions, and the next point of law which they judged by was most frequently the wealth or influence of the various suitors. Thus, the first principles of justice

were violated, and the public had no security for the equal administration of the law.

Under Colbert's administration, these local jurisdictions in Paris were swept away; and to supply their place, several other judges were added to those of the Châtelet, which court, for a time was divided into two; and the new Châtelet for a certain period held its sittings in the Abbey of St. Germain.

All these proceedings, as may well be supposed, gave a new face to the state of society in the metropolis. With a reformed police, a better regulated and more rapid administration of justice; with streets widened and improved, with local jurisdictions done away, and with constant employment for the labouring population of all classes, we may well believe that all that turbulence, irregularity, and wild anarchical spirit which had distinguished the French capital was no longer seen, and that the Paris of Louis XIV. was not the old Paris which it had appeared under his father, or under the regency. The very alteration in the aspect of the metropolis altered in a great degree the tone of society, and contributed not a little to that rapid, general and extraordinary change which other events were working out in the whole state and character of the French people.

At the moment when the reins of government fell into the hands of the young king, everything was

prepared for that change. The wars of the League had rent the feudal edifice to its foundations, the strong arm of Richelieu had levelled the ruins with the sand, and the contentions of the Fronde had swept the field clear. No powers now remained, in fact, but that of the king and that of the people; and as the monarchical principle had triumphed, in the late strife, throughout which the nobles, without seeing deeply into what they did, had propped up the rent banner of feudalism with the pretence of popular purposes, the natural course of events would have led to an immense increase of the royal authority under the most ordinary circumstances: but when, in addition to the triumph gained over the subjects of the crown, were joined extraordinary successes against a foreign enemy, and a glorious peace by which all was gained that could have been hoped, and more was seen in prospect than ever had been dreamed of, nothing was wanted in the prince but a grasping hand and a powerful mind to seize the sceptre of absolute power.

The change which had been wrought in the society of France between the accession of Louis and the peace of the Pyrenees had been great and real, though but little apparent. The butterfly was fully formed in the chrysalis, and wanted but a sunny day to break out into splendour, though the brown skin still concealed it from the eye. Nor is the same simile inapplicable to the young king

himself: he had yielded everything to the directors of his childhood; he had shown some weakness, and had displayed few high qualities; and, to the eyes of all who penetrated no farther than the surface, he was still a mere boy, though there wanted but a bright moment to show him a great and extraordinary monarch.

The circumstance, therefore, of preceding times, and the powers of the king himself, tended naturally to place at once in his hands the most absolute and uncontrolled authority. But despotism itself is subject to many modifications;—there may be a gay and cheerful despotism, a harsh and severe, a dark and gloomy, a capricious and sanguinary despotism;—and various minute events and circumstances gave a peculiar tone to that with which the actual reign of the youthful sovereign commenced, and at the same time rendered it more generally agreeable to the people, and less frequently opposed either by masses or individuals than the power of any of his predecessors had ever been for so long a period of years.

After the death of Mazarin, we have seen that Louis burst forth upon the French people in a new character. The energy and the determination which he displayed, the great abilities of his mind, the grace and dignity of his person, the weariness which the whole French nation felt of civil contentions, the change from poverty and want to prosperity and abundance, the introduction and im-

provement of refined arts, the extension of luxurious habits; the passion for gaming,* and the consequent necessity of frequent pecuniary supplies; the general conviction throughout the country of the selfishness of the higher classes, and their real want of that patriotism to which they had pretended in the civil war,—gave to everything in France a general tendency towards the establishment of the most despotic authority, but of a light and cheerful kind. The people submitted, and were contented; the nobles turned courtiers, and vied with each other in flattery and submission; and devotion to the king became as much *a fashion* under Louis XIV, as opposition to the court had been in the times of the Fronde. But Louis, with greater opportunities and greater skill than the factious leaders of his mother's days, contrived to impress upon that, which had been at first *but a fashion*, the character of a sentiment: he taught the court and the people to believe that their glory was involved in his—that his success and his aggrandizement were intimately united with those of France. In effecting this object, his talents, his courage, his

* How Anquetil arrived at the conclusion that Louis XIV, during the first years of his reign, indulged very little in play, and never in games of chance, I cannot conceive, as Gourville and Choisy are directly opposed to such a statement; and the one shared in the king's gaming-parties, the other witnessed them. Fifty other authorities might be cited to prove the king's extreme love of the gaming-table; but the two I have named, added to Madame de Motteville, are sufficient.

grace, his dignity, his pride, his ambition, his selfishness, each played a part. The great and grasping projects which dazzled his own imagination, dazzled still more easily the imagination of his people: he led them, in short, in the way they were most willing to follow; and while he did so, he kept up his own dignity with so powerful a hand, that the nation felt its dignity increased by that of its monarch.

The submission of the court of Spain to his imperious demand of precedence for the crown of France gratified the French people in the first place, and taught them to respect a king they already admired: but when Louis added thereunto the complete humiliation of the pope, they began to look upon him with a degree of reverence with which they had never regarded even the best of their monarchs.

The facts regarding the differences which took place between the French monarch and the Roman court are briefly as follows:—

The Duke de Créqui, French ambassador at Rome, after long disputes with the brother of the supreme pontiff, was engaged in a squabble with the Corsican guards of the pope, in consequence of the insolence of his domestics, according to the Italian version of the story,—or in consequence of the machinations of Maria Chigi, the pope's brother, according to Crequi's own account. Some of the ambassador's servants were wounded severely, and

one, it would appear, killed on the spot ; and Crequi, quitting Rome, demanded justice. The pope made such reparation as would have satisfied any of the French king's predecessors : some of the offenders were hanged, and the governor of Rome was dismissed on a charge of negligence. But Louis, in a tone that admitted no hesitation, demanded infinitely more, and at the same time marched troops towards the Italian frontier. The pope took fright ; and the proud monarch gratified himself and his people by causing the pontiff to disband the Corsican guard, to exile his brother, to send his nephew Cardinal Chigi to apologise in form, and to raise a monument in Rome recording the offence and the reparation.

Louis, however, in the midst of success, was not without domestic disquietudes, produced in a great degree by his own errors. The appointed retribution of pain and anxiety followed his faults into the midst of his court, and struck him in his splendour and power. The first rise of his passion for La Vallière we have already noticed ; and although it is with pain that we approach the subject, the consequences of that connexion must be traced.

The beauty of Mademoiselle de la Vallière rendered the arrangement he had made with his sister-in-law to affect a passion for her maid of honour no difficult task for the monarch ; but other qualities than mere form or complexion soon rendered that real which had been at first assumed.

"She was not," says the Abbé de Choisy, who knew her well, and had been her companion in infancy,—"She was not one of those perfect beauties that one often admires without loving. She was very loveable, and the words of La Fontaine, '*Et la Grace plus belle encore que la Beauté,*' seemed made for her. She had a beautiful complexion, fair hair, a sweet smile, her eyes were blue, with an expression so tender, but at the same time so modest, that it gained our heart and our esteem at the same moment. Farther, she had but little wit,—but that she did not fail to cultivate continually by reading: no ambition, no interested views, more taken up in dreaming of him she loved than attentive to please him, totally shut up in herself, and in her passion, which was the only one of her whole life."*

Such was the girl that Henrietta of England was foolishly persuaded by the Countess of Soissons to suggest to Louis as the object of attentions which were intended to screen his gallantries towards herself. She soon perceived, however, that the heart of the young monarch was really and not fictitiously touched, and she, as well as Madame de Soissons, was displeased at the result of her own work. An intrigue was immediately commenced for the purpose of sowing dissensions in the royal

* In regard to this point of Mademoiselle de la Vallière's history, Choisy is to be relied upon in preference to Madame de la Fayette. Choisy knew her from her infancy; Madame de la Fayette knew nothing of her till after her appearance at court.

family, and of exposing to the young queen the infidelity of her husband.

It would be tedious to trace here all the particulars of this transaction, or to investigate what part Henrietta had in the affair. She very soon made up her mind to the loss of the king's attentions, and saw him without much pain quit her carriage during their evening promenades at Fontainebleau in order to place himself by the side of that of La Vallière.

Though it would seem that the heart of that unhappy girl was won ere the young king sought it, her virtue was not so easily overcome even by the monarch and her own passion. She suffered the attentions which he paid her, we cannot doubt, with joy, but concealed every expression of her feelings with care.

Louis, too, involved his love in the greatest mystery, and all that appeared upon the surface was the most splendid fêtes and pageants,—ballets in which the king danced disguised, but was discovered by his grace and beauty,—and spectacles in which he appeared in splendour and pomp, always choosing some device which had an allusion to his hidden passion. La Vallière understood the whole, and thus their love went on.

The famous Beauvilliers, Count of St. Aignan, the most skilful, the least scrupulous, and the most ingenious of courtiers, was the confidant of the king, and too soon became that of La Vallière.

Madame de Brancas afforded her countenance to the object of the king's love, and was probably more or less instrumental in her fall.

We will not examine and expose all the fables that have been written in regard to this fair but unfortunate girl, and which have found their way even into the pages of history; it is sufficient that she became the mistress of the king, while the court was still at Fontainebleau; though the most careful concealment shrouded their intrigue, and on her part bitter remorse followed immediately upon her error.

Another intrigue indeed supervened, and the King showed a strong disposition to add Mademoiselle de la Mothe Houdancourt to the number of those who yielded to his seductions; but some feelings of virtue on the part of the young lady herself, it would seem, fortified by the vigorous morality of the Duchess of Navailles, and some iron gratings which she caused to be placed on the roof of the palace around the apartments of the maids of honour, saved Mademoiselle de la Mothe, and left Mademoiselle de la Vallière in full possession of the field. Mademoiselle de Montpensier, however, states her firm conviction to have been, that Louis's attachment to Mademoiselle de la Mothe was merely affected, for the sake of concealing his more real passion for the unhappy Louise de la Vallière.

In the mean while, the intrigue which had gone

on for the purpose of exposing to the young Queen the infidelity of her husband, had proceeded in its course, in the hands of the Countess of Soissons, Henrietta of England, the Count de Guiche, son of the Maréchal de Grammont, and the Marquis de Vardes, a courtier of a lively imagination, loose morals, and ill-defined principles. The latter had proposed to the Count de Guiche, (who gave himself the airs of a lover of Henrietta) to write a letter to the young Queen, as if from her step-mother, the Queen of Spain, notifying to her the connexion between the King and La Vallière, and warning her to be upon her guard.

The Count de Guiche affected to be very learned in the Spanish language, and he undertook the translation of the letter, the original of which was written by Vardes. The hand of the Queen of Spain was correctly imitated on the cover, but not so correctly in the letter itself; and by some contrivance the epistle thus composed was sent through the office of the Count de Brienne, secretary of state for foreign affairs, to Doña Maria Molina, the only one of the Spanish attendants of the Queen of France who had remained with her after her arrival in her husband's dominions. The letter being addressed to the Queen, the Spanish lady was about to deliver it to her royal mistress, when something in its appearance struck her with suspicion, and on examining it more closely she perceived that it was not folded in any degree

like the letters of the Queen of Spain. She remembered also, that the letters from that princess never came through the secretary for foreign affairs ; and her suspicions were ultimately so far excited, that she ventured upon opening the letter before she presented it to her mistress.

No sooner had she done so, than she perceived at once that the hand was not that of the Queen of Spain ; and on reading it, she found that the contents were calculated to cause the greatest uneasiness to her mistress ; though she was convinced, at the same time, that the epistle was undoubtedly not from the step-mother of that princess, as it was composed in very bad Castilian, mingled with a number of French phrases, which at once showed where it had been composed. She hastened with it immediately to the Queen-mother, not daring to show it to the young Queen, and was directed by Anne of Austria to carry it immediately to the King.

When Louis received it, he turned extremely red, and asked if the Queen had seen it. Finding that she had not, and distinguishing at once, from his own knowledge of the Spanish language,* that it was composed by one of his own subjects, he kept possession of it. He then showed it to his

* Voltaire says that Louis knew very little of Spanish ; but several of the contemporary writers, who must from their circumstances have known better than Voltaire, declare that he spoke that language very fluently.

various ministers, in order to ascertain, if possible, who was the writer. No one, however, could give him any information ; and finding that the young Queen was jealous, and showed that jealousy, he revolved in his own mind all the circumstances, and fixed his suspicions upon the Duke and Duchess of Navailles, two of the most virtuous and noble-minded persons of his court, who had attached themselves strongly to Maria Theresa, and did not scruple, as we have seen in one instance, to signify by every decent means their disapprobation of some part of the monarch's conduct.

He was too just, however, to maltreat them upon bare suspicion : but the Countess of Soissons, perceiving that the letter had not had the full effect that she intended, obtained an interview with the young Queen at the convent of the Carmelites, and exposed to her entirely the conduct which Louis was pursuing. Notwithstanding this daring act, she had the art to cast the whole blame of exciting the Queen's suspicions upon the Duke and Duchess of Navailles ; and established their culpability of such indiscretion so clearly in the mind of Louis, that he deprived them of their posts, obliging the Duchess to give up the office of lady of honour to the queen, which she had nobly used in opposition to the queen's husband, and the Duke to sell both his military station in the household, and the government of Havre.

It was not till some time after this that Louis

discovered the truth ; the first suspicion thereof being given to him by Louvois. Means were then immediately taken to examine the affair correctly, and the whole particulars were brought to light. Vardes was at once thrown into the Bastile, and remained a prisoner for a considerable time ; the Count de Guiche was banished from the kingdom ; the Countess of Soissons was ordered to retire into Champagne ; and the only person who remained unpunished was the sister-in-law of the king, whom perhaps he believed to have been actuated by motives which flattered his own vanity.

One great and evil effect, however, which the whole of this transaction occasioned has been justly pointed out by the Abbé de Choisy, who informs us, that until the composition of this letter the intrigue between the King and La Vallière had been kept as secret as possible, and that everything had been done to preserve that decency which is a greater virtue even in kings than in individuals.* From the moment, however, that this letter forced Louis to communicate with his ministers and with many other personages of his court upon the subject of his passion for La Vallière, the reserve and restraint

* For the particulars of the above transactions, correct the accounts of Madame de la Fayette, Choisy, La Fare, &c. by the clear statements of Madame de Motteville, and the occasional insight of what was passing behind the scenes afforded by Gourville. The whole of the affair has been completely mistaken, even in some of the best accounts of the reign of Louis XIV.

which he had put upon himself were forgotten, and his evil example became exposed before all his people undisguised.

The Queen felt his conduct bitterly, and did not always refrain from those stinging though indirect reproaches which, unhappily, have but too little effect in reclaiming. She had, indeed, in the first place, concealed the bitterness of her feelings with care and with discretion. Long before any one had given her even a remote hint of the passion of her husband for La Vallière, and while the greatest pains were taken by every one at the court to conceal the fact from her, she had not only discovered her husband's infidelity, but divined who was the object of his love, and, as such, she one night pointed out La Vallière to Madame de Motteville. Many a bitter tear dewed her solitary pillow ; and when the unhappy girl who yielded to the king's temptations declared, in after years, that at the Carmelites she would remember the pain which the sight of a successful rival's triumph gave her, perhaps she forgot the sorrows that she herself had inflicted on a pure and affectionate heart, and the bitter tears which she had wrung from the eyes of one who had so much more cause to be indignant, who had so much greater a right to weep.

Gradually, however, the Queen ceased to grieve in secret ; and though she displayed no violent or unmeasured anger, she did not refrain altogether from those indications of resentment towards her

husband, which though most natural, were perhaps unwise. He then lost all measures ; and we find that upon the first night of the Carnival in 1663, he refused to accompany Maria Theresa with her party of masks, for the purpose of escorting La Vallière.

The Queen-mother did all that she could to console her daughter-in-law, and on the occasion I have mentioned, accompanied her to the masked ball at the house of the Duke of Anjou ; but Anne of Austria still continued to follow the course which she had laid down for herself with regard to La Vallière, and even admitted her, with the King and his brother, to her sick-chamber, when becoming convalescent after a long illness. That act wounded Maria Theresa deeply ; and it is probable, that the struggle in Anne of Austria's heart between her affection for her son, and her regard for her daughter-in-law, contributed, together with the anxiety which the constant squabbles and dissensions caused by the King's intrigues produced in her mind, and all the fatigues and sorrows which she had undergone through life, to produce that state of ill health into which she now rapidly fell.

During the long fits of illness to which she became subject, her son displayed towards her the tenderest affection ; and, after having represented Louis refusing to accompany his wife to an innocent amusement for the purpose of accompanying his mistress, it is but fair to display the King abandoning all the comforts and luxuries of his high

station, and after having laboured the whole day in the council-chamber, sitting up throughout the night in the sick-room of his dying mother, or only snatching a moment of repose, stretched, with his clothes on, upon a mattress at her feet.

By this time, however, disease had taken so strong a hold of Anne of Austria, that though from time to time she recovered to all appearance entirely, she never remained in health for many weeks ; and at length the dreadful malady of cancer became apparent, of which she died in January 1666. Her sufferings in her last hours were very severe, and the young King mourned for her sincerely ; but neither her counsels and remonstrances, nor even the repentance and remorse of La Vallière herself, could induce him to give up the fatal connexion into which he had entered. That repentance, however, was very often so deep and so sincere, as to induce her to make vast efforts to detach herself from her royal lover.

In the early part of their connexion, we are told by some writers, about the time at which the court first removed to St. Germain, moved by feelings of religion and deep grief at the fault that she had committed, La Vallière suddenly fled from the court and took refuge in the convent of Chaillot. It was in vain, however, that she did so ; for Louis, then in the height of his passion towards her, and in despair at her probable loss, sprang upon horseback, notwithstanding all the dissuasions of his

mother, and, partly by force, partly by entreaties, compelled the unhappy girl to quit the asylum she had chosen and return to the degrading life to which he had condemned her.

She left the convent with tears and deep regret, and either with a presentiment of her after fate, or with a firm resolution ultimately to overcome her passion, she exclaimed, addressing the nun who opened the gates for herself and her royal lover to go forth, “Adieu, my sister! you will see me again soon.”

There are other versions, however, of this story, which rest upon very good foundations, and which do not attribute the retreat of La Vallière entirely to repentance. Madame de la Fayette, who undoubtedly possessed through life the whole confidence of Henrietta of England, and heard what she details from the mouth of that princess herself, narrates the adventure differently, taking away much of the high colouring from the picture. From her account, it would appear that Henrietta herself was carrying on a disgraceful, if not a criminal intercourse with the Count de Guiche, at the same time that the King was pursuing his intrigues with La Vallière. An artful girl of the name of Montalais*

* Mademoiselle de Montalais was one of the maids of honour to the Princess Henrietta of England who was married to the brother of Louis XIV; and it is supposed that to Mademoiselle de Montalais was addressed a letter of scarcely doubtful import, said to have been found in the pocket of Fouquet on his arrest. The clever author of “L’Homme au Masque de Fer,”

was the confidante both of the princess and of her maid of honour, and communicated to La Vallière the secret of her mistress's private interviews with the Count de Guiche, making her promise not to reveal the facts to the King. Louis, on the other hand, had exacted from his mistress, that she should have no concealment of any kind from him ; and he soon divined from the embarrassment of the simple girl whom he had seduced, that she was burdened with a secret which she feared to disclose. He pressed her eagerly to speak, but could only learn that there was something hidden from him, without being able to induce her to betray the trust reposed in her by Montalais. They thus parted in anger ; and Mademoiselle de la Vallière, after having long looked in vain for his return, left the Louvre in despair at night, and took refuge in a small convent at Chaillot. The news of what had happened soon reached the ears of the King, whose anger disappeared before the fear of losing her ; and asserts that this letter was supposed to be addressed to La Vallière ; though in no contemporary author that I have ever seen is such a supposition even dreamt of. He asserts too, that Mademoiselle de Montalais was banished from the court with Mademoiselle de Menneville on the discovery of her connexion with Fouquet. To this statement are directly opposed several of the authors of that day, especially Madame de la Fayette in two places, and Mademoiselle de Montpensier. He is also wrong in saying that Menneville and Montalais were maids of honour to the Queen : one was maid of honour to the Queen-mother, the other to Henrietta of England. Both these errors, which would otherwise be unimportant, greatly affect his view in regard to the identity of Fouquet and the Iron Mask.

after learning with difficulty the place of her retreat, he set off on horseback with only three attendants. He found her in the outer parlour of the convent, for the nuns had refused to receive her within the grate; and when he entered, she was stretched upon the ground bathed in tears. She now told him everything; but it was long ere he forgave her for having withheld one thought from him even for a moment, and though he insisted upon her returning immediately, he remained dissatisfied for several days.

This account I am inclined to believe more accurate than any other, especially as Mademoiselle de Montpensier in her memoirs alludes to the same facts, though less distinctly, and ends by saying, “This retreat made much noise, and brought a good deal of trouble upon those who had a share in it, of which I neither ought to speak nor will speak;” plainly alluding to the conduct of Henrietta towards the Count de Guiche.

While all these things took place, the preparations for war to which we have alluded proceeded rapidly, and from the eyes of his people Louis concealed any domestic discomforts which he might have called upon himself, under shows and pageantry. On these, however, we shall not dwell in this place, but will proceed at once to speak of the first warlike efforts of any importance which the French monarch undertook after having assumed in person the government of his kingdom.

CHAPTER VI.

Plans of England—against Holland—against Spain—against the Netherlands.—Negotiations between France and England.—State of Holland.—Parties in the United Provinces.—Views of De Witt.—War.—Feeble aid given by Louis to Holland.—The Bishop of Munster.—Course of the war.—Negotiations and treaty of Breda.—Spain and Portugal.—Campaign and defeat of Don Juan.—Death of Philip IV.—Louis lays claim to the Low Countries.—Question examined.—Discussions regarding war.—Schemes of Louvois.—Opposition of Turenne.—State of Europe.—Apathy of Spain.—Skill of Louvois.—Conquests in Flanders.—Alarm of Europe.—Sir W. Temple.—The triple alliance.—Turenne and Louvois.—Conquest of Franche Comté.—Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle.—Menacing demeanour of Louis.—His negotiations.—His efforts to corrupt—successful—His visit to the conquered cities.—Visit of Henrietta to England.—The Secret betrayed.—Tragical death of Henrietta.

WHILE these events were proceeding in the court of France, the external relations of that country were day by day becoming more complicated and their aspect more threatening. We have mentioned the negotiation for the recovery of Dunkirk before, in reference to Colbert's commercial views; but there were many other important negotiations taking place in London during the years 1661, 1662, and 1663, conducted principally on the part of France by the famous Count D'Estrades.

Scarcely had Charles II. been restored to the throne of England, when matters of dispute appeared between him and the States of the United Provinces. His relations became complicated by the alliance between England and Portugal; and,

animated with some degree of ambition on first recovering the sceptre which had been wrenched from the hand of his father, Charles, on D'Estrades' arrival in London, was busied with three important projects, in pursuance of which he endeavoured to gain the French King's assistance; labouring hard to persuade the skilful negotiator to whom he was opposed, that the interests of France and England were the same in dealing both with Holland and Portugal.

The first of those three projects was to deprive the Dutch of the right of fishing within certain limits, which, he maintained, they had unjustly seized upon. At the same time he endeavoured to obtain a complete command over the States, by restoring his young nephew, the Prince of Orange, to all the posts, charges, and dignities which had been enjoyed by his ancestors, and by overawing the republican party directed by De Witt, over whose head he held the menace of revealing some private communications which the grand pensionary had entered into with Cromwell, without the authority, and apparently against the wishes, of the States of Holland.

His second project was against Spain, and in favour of Portugal: and it is evident that he proposed to join the British fleet to that of the house of Braganza, in order to intercept the annual argosy from the Indies to Spain; covering his hostile movements against the latter country, for which he still professed friendly feelings, with the pretence of

an expedition against the pirates of Algiers. His third design was, to make the possession of Dunkirk the means of opening a path into the Spanish Netherlands, and for that purpose to attack, in the first place, the fort of Link, the capture of which place would have given him a command of several of the rivers that otherwise opposed the progress of his designs in that quarter.

All these purposes were discovered by D'Estrades within a few days after his arrival in London; and, in fact, much of his information came from Charles himself, who laboured eagerly, as we have said, to persuade him that the King of France's interests were united with his own. D'Estrades adroitly stopped the proceedings against Link,* which were upon the very eve of commencing, without having recourse to any menace, by informing the English court that Louis himself had a claim to half of that fortress, it having been built partly on a territory possessed by the French crown, and that the commissioners of France and Spain were actually in treaty concerning it. All the other facts D'Estrades communicated at once to his sovereign; and Louis's answer with regard to Holland displays so much diplomatic skill and intelligence, that I cannot refrain from giving a part of it in his own words.

* I should have been inclined to believe that the project of attacking Link had been put forth solely in order to enhance the price of Dunkirk, had it not been proved that the English preparations for carrying it into effect were nearly completed when D'Estrades arrived in London.

"The secret," says Louis, writing with his own hand, "which the King, my brother, has confided to you, of his design to re-establish the prince, his nephew, in all his offices, and of the means by which he intends to shut the mouth of the grand pensionary, who is the most opposed thereunto, seems to me a very adroit manner of negotiating in order to engage me in an affair where it does not appear to me that I ought to go so far: for, over and above that, in the present disposition of the States, nothing would shock them more than such a design; because they see, as well as the King of England, the end which he proposes to himself therein, which is to render them more dependent upon him, to which, without doubt, he will find them opposed. I have to consider, moreover, that not being able to make sure of the King of England, nor of the Princess-dowager of Orange, nor of the Elector of Brandenburg, I should play the part of but a poor personage in this affair, even, I say, if it were to succeed; because I should have disengaged the States of Holland in order to increase the authority of England in their territories, which is not at all advantageous for me; and I should not have gained thereby the Prince of Orange, who would always believe that his principal obligation was to his uncle."

Louis's determination in these respects was strengthened and confirmed by the eagerness with which the States themselves sought his support and

alliance, and by the prospect which was thus held out of establishing the French influence in Holland in preference to that of England. Neither the King, however, nor D'Estrades was inclined to press the matter with any great degree of eagerness, for fear of losing the advantages which there was every probability of deriving from the increasing disputes between England and Holland. Ambassadors, indeed, were sent from Holland into France, and the commercial treaty, which we have noticed elsewhere, was negotiated. The basis of that treaty, as stated in the words of Louis himself, was, that each State should mutually assure to the other all its possessions. Holland offered to the King of France to guarantee everything of which he was possessed, whether belonging of old times to his crown, or newly acquired by treaty; and farther, generally, all his rights whatsoever, without any limitation. He on his part agreed to give them the same guarantee; but they demanded that he should add thereunto the words, “even the right of fishing.” To this Louis himself objected, that the right mentioned was assured by the general terms of the treaty. However, the Dutch held out; and, notwithstanding the opposition of England, the King of France agreed to the terms proposed by Holland.

It would be impossible here to follow all the minute turns which the affairs of Holland and England took after this period; but it became daily apparent

to all parties that war must ultimately be the result. In the mean time, Louis aided England in the support of Portugal, taking such means, however, to veil his proceedings in that respect as not to produce an absolute breach of the treaty of the Pyrenees. Marshal Schomberg was sent thither in aid of the King of Portugal, and large bodies of troops were levied both in France and England, but solely under the title of volunteers; and the iniquitous system of suffering the subjects of one country to be enlisted in the service of another, in order to make war upon a third power nominally at peace with the first, was carried to a great and degrading extent.

Charles, indeed, behaved more boldly in the affair than Louis; for on the Spanish ambassador complaining of these levies, the English monarch avowed them at once, and said he would authorise them if they reached ten times the amount. Louis, however, concealed his share in the matter as far as possible, and still kept upon apparently good terms with his father-in-law, the Spanish monarch. Even after the conclusion of the commercial treaty he carried on secret negotiations also with the States, and may be said to have directed, in a great degree, the proceedings of their ambassadors at London. It was by his advice, there is reason to believe, that various persons who had taken part in the death of Charles I. were basely given up to the English King by a nation that had not only

afforded them shelter but had treated with the Commonwealth ; but in other points he encouraged the Dutch strongly to resistance, perceiving clearly, that it was by no means to the interest of his growing commerce that the two great maritime powers should be on terms of any very close alliance.

In the end of 1663, and throughout the whole course of 1664, measures actually hostile took place between England and Holland, without any absolute declaration of war. It would appear, indeed, that Louis did not absolutely promote such violent proceedings ; though there can be no doubt that he was not at all displeased to see the continued ill-will of the two countries. He even endeavoured to prevent the commencement of declared hostilities in which he himself was likely to be ultimately entangled ; but his proceedings were slow and not particularly zealous, and at length a formal declaration of war between Holland and England took place in March 1665.

The English nation, jealous of the commercial prosperity of Holland, eagerly seconded the views of the King against that country, and in regard to the war a remarkable degree of union prevailed throughout Great Britain. Such, however, was not the case with the Dutch, who were very much divided in opinion, and had many reasons to be doubtful of the support of France.

One of the grand objects of Charles I. was undoubtedly, as we have before said, to restore his

nephew the Prince of Orange to all the power which had been held by his ancestors in the United Provinces. But between Holland and England there existed, besides numerous other most fertile causes of discord, unsettled claims upon distant territories, rival colonies in remote parts of the world, maritime jealousy, and constant commercial opposition. These were national motives for hostility, and affected a large body of the Dutch people. But, on the other hand, considerations of general interest were set aside by the political factions which divided the United Provinces, and which may be classed under the names of the Republican and the Monarchical parties.

The Monarchical party was, of course, that which was attached to the interests of the house of Orange; and, as always happens in political divisions, a thousand different and even contradictory motives swelled the ranks of the faction opposed to the existing order of things. The natural discontent that all short-sighted men feel at the temporary inconveniences which attend every form of government; the forgetfulness of equal or superior inconveniences under a former state of things; the love of change for the mere sake of change; the prospect of obtaining power, place, and influence, by supporting a family liberal of promises and capable of rewarding; the preference for a system which, while it recognises the existence of permanent power in an individual at

the head of the state, encourages the growth and organization of similar institutions throughout the whole country, in the form of an aristocracy ; gratitude, old affection, and admiration for a race of men who had so greatly contributed to free the United Provinces from the tyranny of their former monarchs, —all combined to raise up a great party in favour of the house of Orange and of the re-establishment in that house of the power which had been misused by others, and which might again be misused by it. The advocates of the Orange party, however, brought forward against the Republicans only the more pertinent and tangible of those objections to which the existing state of things was obnoxious.

The natural inconveniences of the Republican form of government—which, in the hands of men not yet fully experienced in the management of the vast machine that they were called upon to employ, had already pressed heavily upon some portions of the Dutch people, and, ultimately, in a moment of unforeseen difficulty, overthrew the democratic party altogether—were left to work their way by their own weight against the enemies of the house of Orange. But the advocates of Monarchy pointed out, that since the abolition of the Stadholderate, the taxes and impositions on the people had increased rather than diminished ; that the country had suffered greatly by unnecessary wars ; that the power of pirates and corsairs, by which the trade of Holland was severely injured,

had been suffered terribly to increase; and that the frontier towns and strong places of the United Provinces, which were her bulwarks against foreign aggression, had both been suffered to fall into decay, and left in a state unprepared for defence.

On the side of the Republican party, its great champion and martyr, John de Witt, replied, urging in the very strongest terms the continued exclusion of the house of Orange, and the permanent abolition of the Stadholderate—although he had, since the restoration of Charles II, and in order to gratify that monarch, rescinded the obnoxious and insulting passage in the treaty with England, by which the family of Orange were by name excluded in the Stadholderate. He defended the republican form of government as the only one adapted to the situation of the Dutch people; and he answered the objections of his antagonist with his usual force and perspicuity, but with more justice in regard to the three first charges than with reason regarding the last. He showed that the province of Holland alone, small in size and not rich in territory, had, on the death of the last Stadholder, been left burdened with a debt of one hundred and forty millions of guilders, besides floating debts to the amount of thirteen millions; and he proved that it was to pay the interest and diminish the capital of this debt that the imposts were continued, the people still suffering from the improvidence of the government that had gone before. This, together

with the conduct of the people of Holland at the time, he illustrated by a parable so characteristic of the man and of his style, that we cannot omit it here.

"I wish," he said, "those poor people would have a little foresight: they would then consider that it went with the affairs of the commonwealth as I once remember it happened in a certain family that was blessed with a fair estate. The parents being dead, the children were put under the care of a lavish guardian, who giving no account, spent the estate hand-over-head, and when there was no more money in cash, immediately took up a good sum upon interest at the charge of the poor orphans; so that not only the aforesaid children, but all the children and servants of the neighbourhood, lived most bravely, and had and did everything that their hearts could wish for. But it afterwards happened that the wasteful guardian died, and the said children fell under the care and tuition of the chamber of orphans, who kept a continual eye over them, and placed them under the daily care of an honest, diligent, and sober man, who regulated the house after a quite different manner, without any waste; so that whereas in the time of the aforesaid guardian there was yearly more spent than the revenue amounted to, and every time money taken up at interest, the revenue did afterwards considerably exceed the expense, and the surplus was laid out to pay off a part of the debt which the former

guardian had contracted. But then the children murmured, saying, that their condition was much impaired, that they had a pleasant life under the former guardian: and so did the neighbours, their children and servants. They said they could enjoy themselves with delight in that family under the former guardian, but that it was now become a barren place. But these poor orphans little thought that in case the former management had lasted longer, it would have proved fatal to them in their riper years.—And we, poor simple Hollanders! who may with reason be called orphans, how long shall we remain in our childhood and minority; not observing that the plenty we then were sensible of proceeded from the ill husbandry of a prodigal guardian or steward, which hath run us in debt as aforesaid?"

In answer to the two next charges against the republican government, De Witt answered by tracing a true, but somewhat strained, connexion between the previous existence of a Stadholder in Holland and the war with the English Commonwealth; and by insinuating a belief in a rumour current long before, that some of the piracies under which the Dutch had suffered, had been encouraged by the last Stadholder, in order to decrease the power and resistance of Amsterdam. Whether this charge was well founded or not, I have met with no means of ascertaining; but in regard to the fortifications of the frontier cities, De Witt was un-

doubtedly wrong. He seems to have looked upon the fortresses of Holland with both contempt and hatred : he more than once called them “ citadels to hold poor Holland in fetters ;” and he argued at various times, that Holland united with Utrecht could resist any external power without fortified cities, and that every great city in Holland, whether well or ill fortified, was able to defend itself against any force from without.

In both these instances he begged the chief point of the question, and took as a thing granted, a position which never did exist in any country, and probably never will, that the defenders of the country, in case of attack, would be entirely of one mind ; forgetting that it is far less frequently a difference of opinion in regard to objects, than a difference of opinion as to means, that produces the ruinous dissensions which overthrow great purposes. But the most important and convincing part of his argument was, the statement of what advantages had accrued to the country under a republican form of government. He showed that the interest of the debt had been reduced from five to four per cent.; that the amount thus annually saved had been appropriated to the discharge of the capital; and that, in twenty-one years from the reduction—of which period a considerable number of years had already expired—the debt would be extinguished. He farther showed, that notwithstanding the economy wherewith all things had been

managed by the republican government, sixty line-of-battle ships had been built, and immense magazines constructed.

By another train of reasoning — far less distinct than that by which he proves that these advantages had been derived from the peculiar political state he advocated — the grand pensionary went on to contend, that the republican government had quieted all the dissensions of the provinces. But therein he failed entirely in producing conviction, and had himself, ere long, but too bitter reason to know, that internal order, peace, and unanimity are not the peculiar attributes of republics. His arguments, however, and the power of the democratic party were sufficient, during the extreme youth of the Prince of Orange, to maintain in Holland the government that existed, and to enable De Witt and his fellow-rulers to take measures for resisting the aggressions of England. Those aggressions, as we know, had already gone to a very great length, urged on by the maritime and commercial jealousy of the people of Great Britain.

In the end of 1664, a hundred and thirty Dutch merchantmen had been captured by England ; acts of hostility had occurred in Guinea, at the Cape de Verd, and in the West Indies ; but Louis had continued to avoid taking any active part against Great Britain, notwithstanding all the representations of De Witt, who on this occasion saw in France the natural ally of Holland. On the 13th of June,

however, a great naval engagement took place between the Dutch fleet, commanded by Opdam and Van Tromp, and the English fleet, commanded by the Duke of York and Prince Rupert. Opdam was defeated and killed ; Van Tromp saved the remains of his fleet ; and on the very same day a treaty was concluded between Arlington and an envoy of the Bishop of Munster, by which it was agreed that the warlike and restless prelate should invade the United Provinces with an army of twenty thousand men, in consideration of sums of money to be paid by England.

This treaty at once called Louis into action, and he notified to the Bishop of Munster, that if he made any hostile movement against the States of Holland, he would find the troops of France prepared to oppose him. This fact was announced to the States by D'Estrades on the 22nd of July, together with the information that the French monarch was about to send to their assistance a body of troops by the way of Flanders. Nor were such tidings unnecessary to keep up the spirits of the States, which were for the time so depressed by the defeat of Opdam, the menacing attitude of the warlike Bishop of Munster, and the want of activity displayed by France, that the party of De Witt was in great danger of being overthrown ; while that of the Prince of Orange, or the English faction, had great and reasonable hopes of gaining an ascendancy in the States. Still, however, Louis did not declare

war against the King of England : Spain took pains to sow suspicions of the intentions of France in the minds of the Dutch people ; and the power and even the life of De Witt was often menaced by the opposite faction.

The French monarch, in the mean time, pursued his negotiations with the court of London ; and Charles, knowing the progress of his secret agents in Holland, contrived to prolong the transactions, holding out the hope of peace, but never giving so distinct a reply as either to pledge himself to an accommodation or to drive the French monarch into war. The latter result, however, gradually became the most probable ; and Louis drew up and transmitted to Holland a plan of operations against England, of which some of the particulars are curious, though his general views were in many respects evidently mistaken.

In the first place, the French King establishes as the basis of his reasoning, that the war of England against Holland is rather that of the people than of the sovereign ; that as the people always grow tired when they lose by any proceeding—are violent in their resolutions, but relax in execution, and will be disinclined to endure, for any length of time, the expenses of such a war,—it would be advisable rather to draw out everything as far as possible, in order to tire the British nation, than to make great exertions to bring the war to an end at once. He then proceeds to state as an undoubted fact, that

the Dutch are superior to the English as far as the means of protracting the war go; but that they are very much inferior in strength, in the goodness of their vessels, in the valour of their leaders, and in artillery. He therefore proposes, that the fleets of France and Holland united should endeavour to ruin the commerce of England in all the seas; that squadrons should be kept in the Mediterranean, in the Baltic, and in the Channel; and that vessels should be detached in all directions to interrupt the commercial efforts of England in every quarter of the world. At the same time, he proposes to find occupation for Charles II. at home, by exciting the malcontents in Scotland and Ireland, the Catholics, the Puritans, and the Presbyterians alike, to revolt against the crown.

Still, however, Louis hung back in the execution of his purposes, till the aspect of affairs in the beginning of 1666 forced him to declare war against England, on the 26th of January in that year, according to the terms of his treaty with Holland. The threats of the King of France, in the mean time, had produced their effect upon the Bishop of Munster, and the negotiations of De Witt confirmed that prelate in holding back from the execution of his treaty with Great Britain; though to the last moment, in dealing with the agents of England, he affected to be in active preparation for invading Holland.

Our famous minister, Sir William Temple suffered

himself to be deceived by the bishop, who had been unable, from the first, to furnish the contingent which he had promised in his treaty with England. The intriguing prelate obtained a portion at least of the money that had been promised to him, and then made an ill-organised and ill-conducted attempt upon part of the Dutch territory, which was successfully repelled by Cornelius De Witt, the brother of the grand pensionary, and by Prince John Maurice of Nassau, with the forces of the States, and six thousand men who had been despatched to their aid by the French monarch.

Finding no probability of obtaining any advantages by carrying on the war, and foreseeing that he might be ultimately stripped of his dominions by France and Holland, the bishop concluded a separate peace; and even after he had signed the treaty, endeavoured to obtain another instalment of the subsidy promised by England, but was defeated in his roguish purpose by the activity of Sir William Temple.

The French fleet, which was now in some degree re-established by the care of Colbert, at length put to sea, under the command of the Duke of Beaufort, in order to support the navy of Holland; but the part that France took in the war was altogether insignificant, and served but little to free the Dutch from the danger in which they were placed. That nation itself made vast efforts to obtain a superiority at sea; and in the beginning of June

1666, the Dutch fleet, commanded by De Ruyter and Van Tromp, encountered the English fleet, under Monk and Prince Rupert,* and a battle which lasted for four days, with scarcely any intermission, took place. It would seem that some advantage was gained by the Dutch; but both fleets were tremendously shattered, and retired to the ports of their own country to refit. Shortly after, however, they again encountered, and one of the most tremendous naval engagements in history took place, in which the Dutch suffered a complete defeat; twenty of their first-rate men-of-war were captured or sunk; and three admirals, with four thousand men, were killed on the part of the States. The French fleet could not come up in time to take part in the battle, and all that Louis did was to furnish De Witt with the means of repairing the losses of the States as rapidly as possible.

The energy of the grand pensionary himself, however, effected much more than the slow and unwilling succour of the French king. With almost superhuman exertion new fleets were made ready and manned, while the grand pensionary amused the English ministers with the prospect of a speedy

* It is a singular fact, that in the life of Monk published by Webster, and in more than one history of Holland, this battle is altogether omitted, though we find from a despatch of D'Estrades, dated 17th June, that the fleet of De Ruyter had suffered so severely as to leave only twenty ships fit to keep the sea.

peace on their own terms ; and at a moment when England was least prepared, De Ruyter and Cornelius De Witt appeared upon the coast, sailed up the Thames, attacked and took Sheerness, and destroyed a great number of ships of the line. A multitude of smaller vessels were burnt ; and the consternation was so great throughout England, that a large quantity of stores and many ships were sunk and destroyed by order of the British authorities themselves, while De Ruyter ravaged the whole sea-coast from the mouth of the Thames to the Land's End.

The negotiations for peace which had commenced at Breda, were now carried on upon terms much more advantageous to Holland, and were speedily concluded ; England, notwithstanding the naval glory she had gained, being fully as much tired of the war as the States themselves. A general treaty was signed on the 25th of July. But while these events were taking place in the North, others, which we must now notice, had occurred to affect France in a different but not less important manner.

While opposing England languidly in the Dutch war, Louis had given vigorous and effectual support to the Portuguese allies of Charles II. The army of Don Juan of Austria, which had been collected in the hope of bringing Portugal once more under the domination of Spain, had advanced, after having been considerably reinforced, and he was enabled to make himself master of several import-

ant places upon the Portuguese frontier. He was interrupted, however, in his career of success by Don Sancho Manuel, an officer who had greatly distinguished himself by the defence of Elvas, and had been created Count of Villaflor. With him appeared the still more experienced French general Schomberg, and a considerable auxiliary force; and it soon became evident to Don Juan that all the movements of the Portuguese were directed by their allies.

Not willing to risk his well-earned fame by a battle with a powerful army commanded by two such officers, Don Juan turned towards Badajos; but imprudently diminished his army by leaving strong garrisons in the places he had taken, and also by sending a division to alarm Lisbon.

Schomberg and the Portuguese followed with all speed, and overtook him in the neighbourhood of Ameygial, where a sanguinary battle took place which lasted till nightfall, but which was not doubtful in its event. The Spanish army gladly effected its escape during the darkness, leaving the field in the hands of the enemy, together with almost all the baggage and artillery, and an immense number of prisoners.* The French and Portuguese lost five thousand men; but the independence of Portugal was established from that hour on a foundation which nothing could shake.

* This battle is sometimes mentioned under the name of the battle of Estremoz.

In the same year, Louis XIV. himself, after long negotiations and various treaties with the Duke of Lorraine, marched into the territories of that prince, and caused the town of Marsal to be invested by the Maréchal de la Ferté. Unable to offer any resistance, and no longer permitted to employ the wiles with which he usually combated the powerful and greedy neighbour who now assailed him, the Duke of Lorraine was forced to obey the dictation of Louis, and by a treaty concluded at Nomeni, on the 1st of September, surrendered Marsal to the king, as the price of enjoying the rest of his own dominions for some few years longer.

These limited efforts, however, were not sufficient to give vent to the military spirit of the French people ; and though, in 1664, an expedition under the Duke of Beaufort took Gigeri in Africa and defeated the piratical forces which made that port their general rendezvous, and a corps of six thousand volunteers aided Montecuculi in the famous battle of St. Godart, in which he completely overcame the Turks, it was very evident that the warlike spirit of the nation and the love of military glory long apparent in the king would soon produce a more general and important movement on the part of France.

A pretext for such a movement was not long wanting. On the 17th of September 1665, Philip IV. of Spain, who had long been in a state of

indifferent health, ended his inglorious career, leaving a son, the natural heir and successor to his dominions. It would have seemed that under these circumstances no title whatsoever could be put forth by the French King to any part of the territories held by the King of Spain; but Louis XIV. was both fond of military glory and bent upon territorial aggrandisement, and he had determined to snatch a portion from the Flemish inheritance of his wife's brother, although many objections existed against any claim he could urge to participate in the succession of Philip IV.

In the first place, the young Queen of France had, upon her marriage with Louis XIV., made a formal renunciation of all her contingent claims to any part of the territories of her father; and the right of male succession to the Spanish possessions in Flanders had been established and recognised ever since the reign of Charles V. Thus, two strong objections existed to the claims of Louis XIV.; but he, on his part, opposed these difficulties by two pretexts,—the one specious, the other weak.

With regard to the renunciation, it had been clearly and distinctly stated that the young Queen made it on consideration of receiving for her dowry a certain sum which was not yet paid, although the periods which had been stipulated for the payments had long elapsed. Thus, the French contended that the Spaniards not having fulfilled the condition, the renunciation was null.

In regard to the young Queen's claim upon Flanders, to the exclusion of her brother, the pretext of the French King was but weak. I shall state it in the terms of the President de Hénault, without embarrassing it with the terms of the old law of Brabant. Louis asserted that by the ancient customary law of the territories in dispute, the children of a second marriage were excluded from succeeding to hereditary fiefs by the children of a first marriage, whether male or female; and that therefore Maria Theresa, being born of Philip's first marriage with Elizabeth of France, must succeed to the Spanish possessions in the Low Countries, to the exclusion of her brother by a second marriage.

Many arguments were to be urged against this doctrine; but Spain principally rested upon the renunciation; alleging, that if the dowry of the Queen of France had not been paid by Spain, the dowry of Philip's first wife, Elizabeth of Bourbon, had not been paid by France. But there were still stronger objections: the law under which Louis claimed was merely a law of Brabant, and the customary laws of Flanders and Hainault were left out of the question. Neither did it appear that this law had been acted upon for certainly more than a century, and it was evident that other laws had swept it away.

All these pretexts, however, were only used to give a colouring of justice to Louis's purpose of conquest; but, to satisfy his own mind and relieve

a tractable conscience, the King of France laid the matter before his council and before his confessor. A body of theologians was easily found to tranquillise the spirit of the king in regard to the robbery he was about to commit; but while he discussed his claim with the court of Spain, opposing civilian to civilian and parchment to parchment, he had to contend with a more powerful opponent of his war-like purposes in his own court, and in the person of his great minister Colbert.

The whole policy of that minister was pacific; the success of all his schemes for the benefit of France depended upon his maintaining the country in a state which, while it lost no part of dignity, involved none of the expenses of a general war. Thus, he had not very strongly opposed the light and but little expensive support afforded by Louis to Holland in its contest with England. The advantages to be gained by aiding the Dutch more than counterbalanced the charges of the war; and there was little, if any probability, that the assistance given by Louis to one of the maritime states would bring on hostilities with the rest of Europe.

In regard to a war in the Netherlands, however, there was no probability whatsoever that it could be carried on successfully without calling for the interference of almost every other state; and Colbert watched with great anxiety all the proceedings of those who, for their own selfish purposes, were

stimulating the naturally ambitious mind of Louis to commence the aggressions towards which he was but too strongly inclined already.

There were, indeed, many persons about the monarch who were eagerly desirous of hurrying him on to war; and there can be no doubt that long before the death of Philip IV. the mind of Louis XIV. was prepared to urge his claims upon the Low Countries in case of that event. Some time before it took place, we find the Count D'Estrades writing to the King, to inform him that his hesitating conduct towards the Dutch was likely so far to alienate them as to have a detrimental effect upon his policy “in case he should attempt the conquest of Flanders on the death of the King of Spain.”

Louvois, also, who was acting as minister at war, and who saw, with the burning restlessness of envy, that all the great efforts of the country were directed by Colbert, was eagerly desirous of finding some field in which to signalise himself, and used every artful means to increase his master's passion for conquest. But before we proceed to notice his efforts for that purpose, it may be necessary to take some notice of the character of a man whose passions and whose counsels, whose talents and whose errors, had immense influence upon the career of Louis XIV. himself.

François Le Tellier, Marquis of Louvois, was the son of the well-known Michael Le Tellier, and by him had been early introduced into public

affairs. In the first instance, he had every advantage which could aid him in rising, except those which depended upon himself. He was nearly of the same age as the king, had passed through the same scenes and dangers as himself, and was brought into his society from his youth. His own faults and errors, however, had nearly ruined him in the outset; and the picture given of him in his early days, by one who knew him well, is certainly not very favourable. "He was at first," says a contemporary,* "a bad personage enough; with a mind to all appearance heavy, flying from labour, loving his pleasure above everything, and, to say all in one word, debauched even to excess. This displeased his father infinitely, who feared that all his hopes would be overthrown thereby. He corrected him on that account often, menacing him even with very strange things."

Louvois, however, after more than once finding that the King had discovered his excesses, began to take some pains to conceal them, and applied himself to business with greater diligence than he had shown during his previous career. Le Tellier obtained for him, without difficulty, the survivorship of his office of secretary at war, and entrusted to him the active business of that office; and when,

* The memoirs from which I quote this passage have been adulterated; but it now seems admitted generally, that a great part is genuine, and that the hand of the interpolator may be easily distinguished. All the passages I have cited I have examined strictly, and believe them to be genuine.

in 1666, the father was promoted to the office of chancellor, the son was received as one of the secretaries of state. He now took a pleasure in the exercise of his functions, and, naturally of an ambitious and fiery disposition, he not only strove eagerly for the means of signalising himself, but looked round him with hatred and jealousy upon every one whose station or whose schemes stood in the way of his own advancement. The chief object of his hatred and of his jealousy was Colbert, whose pacific purposes were opposed to all his own views and wishes, and who had risen too rapidly, both in favour with the king and in influence with the country, to be viewed without envy, either by Le Tellier or his son.

Taking advantage of the warlike disposition of the people and the monarch, Louvois and his father, on the death of the King of Spain, eagerly pressed Louis forward to attempt the conquest of Flanders. Colbert, on the contrary, was, as we have said, opposed to them; and Colbert was supported by Turenne. The great minister laid before the monarch all the advantages which six years of peace had produced; and he promised, if Louis would avoid the temptation held out to him, that the same means which had already raised up France from a state of the most lamentable depression to a state of the most glorious prosperity, should render him the richest and most powerful monarch that ever reigned.

Turenne, at the same time, showed the French sovereign the risk he ran of bringing the enmity of all the surrounding nations upon him by his attack upon Flanders : he pointed out that Germany, Holland, and England were already jealous of his influence, and that by extending his frontier he would only multiply his enemies. The warrior spoke with the voice of the patriot, and the statesman with the voice of the philosopher; but they spoke in vain. The warlike ambition of Louis and the selfish eagerness of Louvois overcame all their efforts : war was determined upon at all risks ; and Colbert and Turenne, seeing that it was in vain to oppose it farther, joined together to obviate the evils of conquest by rendering it as rapid, as complete, and as signal as possible.

The King, indeed, hesitated for some time, shaken by the opinions of those in whose wisdom and sincerity he had the fullest confidence : but Louvois never ceased his efforts to lead Louis on to that career in which the talents of the young monarch himself and those of his minister-at-war were likely to find a full field for their display ; and some of the means that he employed for that purpose were very ingenious.

By the advice of Turenne, Louis had established, even during the time of peace, a number of experimental camps, in which the military skill and spirit of the people were kept up by constant exercises. Louvois skilfully incited him to visit these camps,

and examine with his own eyes the condition and situation of his troops ; and Louis, in the midst of the pomp and pageantry of war, felt the habits of his youth and the long-suppressed passion for military glory return upon him in full force. The necessity of employing a warlike people, the pleasure of increasing his dominions, the honour he would acquire by adding to France some of the richest and most important districts in Europe, the disgrace which might attend the relinquishment of rights which he had asserted, all pressed upon his mind, and were received as valid motives for recommencing the war with Spain.

Before we give any account of that event, however, it may be necessary to examine for a moment what was the state of the surrounding countries of Europe at the time that Louis chose for making this aggression upon the Spanish territories.

England and Holland were still actually at war ; each was suffering from the eager hostilities which it had been carrying on against the other, and each seemed eager for an interval of peace. Neither of them was likely, under these circumstances, to oppose the King of France unassisted ; and the relative situation of each towards the other rendered it very improbable that they should unite for the purpose of impeding Louis in the conquest of Belgium.

At the same time England, allied with Portugal, and in an actual state of hostility with Spain, could

not be expected to give her any assistance ; and Holland, bound by treaties to France, and leaning upon her for support, was still less in a situation to afford the Spanish monarchy hopes of succour. In Germany the case was different : the Emperor was the natural ally of the Spanish sovereign ; and though his power was far inferior to that which many other emperors had possessed, though his finances were in a state of great depression and his resources by no means capable of being made easily available, yet his troops were still in the full glow of success from their victories over the Turks, a peace had just been concluded with the Ottoman Empire, and the insurrection of Hungary had been suppressed ; so that all his forces were free to act in whatsoever direction he pleased.

Savoy, which might have created an irritating diversion by attacking the Italian frontier of the French king, was held in a degree of subjection to the throne of France ; which subjection, though merely imaginary, had for the time as much power as more real bonds. Portugal was bound to France by every tie of gratitude ; and the Northern Powers, with the exception of Russia, were either friendly to Louis or little to be feared.

With Germany, then, it behoved the French monarch to deal in the first place, so as either to attach the Emperor absolutely to his interests, or to prevent his exercising the forces of Austria in opposition to the views of France.

It would seem that Louis, under these circumstances, employed various means to effect that purpose. In the first place, he treated secretly with the Emperor himself; and an arrangement was either sketched out or determined upon, by which it was agreed that Leopold should allow the French monarch to seize upon Belgium, on condition of leaving to the head of the house of Austria undisturbed possession of Spain itself in the event of the death of Charles II. of Spain without issue. A great degree of mystery, however, involves this treaty. That a document of the kind did exist in France, there can be no doubt; but whether it was or was not a definitive treaty to the effect I have mentioned, I cannot pretend to say.

It is certain, indeed, that Louis himself did not regard this act on the part of the Emperor as a sufficient security that his own ambitious designs would meet with no opposition from the German branch of the house of Austria. Before he took a step forward in fulfilment of his purposes against Flanders, he negotiated with all the petty princes of the empire who might secure to him a party sufficiently strong to neutralize the probable opposition of the Emperor himself, and treated especially with those small sovereigns whose territories surrounded the frontiers of Belgium and the United Provinces.

The treaty between Holland and the Bishop of Munster was carried on under his mediation, and

brought to a rapid conclusion by his threats. Colbert was sent to Cleves to negotiate secretly with other princes of the empire, and treated actively and to great effect with the Electors of Cologne and Brandenburg, the Dukes of Neuburg, Lüneburg, the Count of Waldeck, and several others. At the same time, he engaged the Swedes to hold ready in Bremen a force of twelve thousand men to invade the empire from the North in case the Emperor should ultimately decide upon embracing the Spanish cause.

From Spain itself Louis had but little opposition to fear. The government of the greater portion of the Peninsula was not only in the hands of a woman, but of a weak and incapable woman. The King was an infant; and the Queen was governed by a bigoted, and narrow-minded man, called Father Nithard. The only man who could have made any effectual resistance, or whose military and political talents could have saved the State, was in exile from the court, at variance with the Queen, and saw between him and the authority which he was desirous of obtaining—both as the natural object of a not unambitious mind, and as the means of restoring some degree of energy and dignity to the government—the great gulf of a civil war, the first effect of which would be to paralyse the efforts of the nation before it was possible to revive them.

Such were the circumstances of the countries around the French monarch, and such were some

of his efforts to turn those circumstances to his own advantage, when Louis undertook the conquest of Belgium.

The situation of that district itself was equally favourable to his views. It was governed at that time by the Marquis of Castel Rodrigo, who would appear, from the account of Sir W. Temple, to have been a weak and a cunning man, and, from the account of D'Estrades, to have been an active and intriguing, but not a penetrating or energetic man. Almost all the garrisons had been weakened after the conclusion of the war with France; almost all the fortifications had been suffered to fall into decay.

It had been long evident, from the very claims of the French king, and the polemic disputes which took place with regard to the succession, that Louis would ultimately make a military effort to possess himself of the Netherlands: but he still contrived to blind the indolent Spaniards, whose character he well knew, by carrying on the diplomatic part of his transactions to the last; and nothing was done to put the Netherlands in a state of defence. At the same time Castel Rodrigo, by the most ill-judged measures in regard to Holland, rendered the most powerful party in the States inimical to Spain, and, by steps equally injudicious, gave England a fair pretext for neglecting the general interests of Europe, and suffering the French king to wrest as much from Spain as he thought proper.

It was indeed a curious thing, as one of the old French writers has observed, to see France and Spain, during the preceding war, united in defence of Holland against England.* But a still more extraordinary state of things took place in the month of May 1667, when France and Spain were seen united in defence of Holland in the North, and still at war with England, while Portugal and France united were waging war against Spain in the South, and France was invading the Spanish territory in Flanders. This very contrariety, however, afforded Louis the opportunity he desired; for, in the state of confusion and uncertainty which reigned amongst the powers of Europe, he was sure of having the command of a sufficient space of time to enable him to complete the conquest of a country so ill prepared to resist him as that which he meditated to attack.

If few or no measures were employed on the part of the Spaniards to oppose him, every step was taken by Louis which could render his projected conquest certain and rapid. Now appeared the extraordinary genius of Louvois; and under his hands a new science started into birth,—that of the commissariat. The habit of supplying armies entirely by the plunder of the countries they invaded had

* The peace was not concluded between England and Holland till the 25th of July: and in June the Dutch sailed up the Medway as far as Chatham, and burned the magazines, &c. at Sheerness; while in the month of May of the same year, Louis began the campaign in the Low Countries.

long been done away, it is true ; but no general system for ensuring to large bodies of men in an enemy's country the means of subsistence had ever been followed by any minister before Louvois. Magazines, had indeed, been formed as occasion required by the armies requiring them ; but now all along the frontier of Flanders vast storehouses were established, and supplied with the means of extending themselves in every direction by branches into the country about to be invaded. Wherever the army turned in its advance, there its magazines were ready to follow it, thrown out like veins from those left behind ; and if compelled to retreat, it was sure to find increasing resources behind it.

Immense forces had been collected quietly upon the northern frontiers of France, and early in the year 1667 they began to move forward towards Flanders, gradually forming themselves into three grand corps. Louvois directed the administration of the supplies ; Colbert furnished the means with profusion ; and Turenne, who had been created marshal-general of the armies of the King of France, directed the military movements.

The Queen was appointed regent during the absence of the King ; a corps of troops under the Duke of Noailles was sent to protect Roussillon ; and all having been secured within the realm, the attack upon Flanders began.

Louis put himself at the head of the principal corps of his army, telling Turenne that he was

coming to learn under him the art of war; and, with twenty-five thousand foot and ten thousand horse, that division advanced upon the Sambre towards Charleroi. At the same time, the celebrated Crequi, with a large force, entered the territory of Luxembourg; and the Maréchal d'Aumont marched on, keeping near the sea to the north-west.

Scarcely was the rest of Europe aware that Louis was actually in arms, ere Charleroi, Binche, Ath, Tournai, Douai, Oudenarde, Alost, Bergues, Furnes, Armentières, and Courtrai had surrendered to Louis or his generals. A town of far greater importance to France than any of these, however, still remained to be taken; and, notwithstanding some blind opposition on the part of Louvois, Louis determined to undertake the siege of Lille.

No city in the Low Countries was in so good a condition for defence as that place. The town was large, the fortifications strong, the extent of lines necessary to besiege it with any hope of success so great that a very powerful force was required for that purpose, and nothing was wanting for the defence of the fortress but a more numerous garrison. The city contained a force of only four thousand regular troops; but there were twenty thousand citizens capable of bearing arms within the walls, and these were partially called into activity as soon as the siege began. The governor showed at once his resolution of making a vigorous resistance; the suburbs were by his order destroyed, the citizens

enrolled, and everything that could aid the enemy or impede the defence removed.

From the 10th to the 18th of August was spent by Louis in completing the lines of circumvallation;* and the corps of the Marquis de Crequi having joined the King's army, the trenches were opened on the 19th.

The governor of Lille, after having taken every necessary step for the defence of the fortress, with the gallant politeness which was then still practised between officers of distinction commanding adverse forces, sent out to compliment Louis on his arrival, and to beg him to notify where his own quarters were established, that the guns of the fortress might not fire in that direction. Louis replied by thanking him for his courtesy but informed him that in the French camp the King's quarters were everywhere.

Although no stimulus was necessary to animate the French soldiery, yet Louis wisely took every occasion of showing that he was ready to participate in all their dangers. Each day he visited the trenches himself, and for some time continued to do so on a white horse, which of course directed the fire of the fortress towards him. Turenne remonstrated in vain; but at length losing patience, he threatened to resign the command and quit the

* The Histoire Militaire de Louis XIV. says, that the place was previously invested by Humières, but that Louis arrived soon after, “et fit travailler aux lignes de circonvallation.”

army if the King exposed himself so unnecessarily. That he ran great risk on several occasions there can be no doubt ; and one day, while inspecting the trenches on foot, one of his pages was killed immediately behind him. A soldier, seeing his danger in the exposed situation in which he had placed himself, caught him rudely by the arm and pulled him away, exclaiming, “ Come away ! Is that your place ?”

A curious anecdote is told also of the siege of Lille, which shows the spirit in which the war was conducted on both sides. Having learned that Louis had no ice in his camp, and the weather being excessively hot, the governor daily sent a portion for the King’s use. That portion, however, was but small, and one morning Louis remarked to the Spanish officer who brought it, that he was very much obliged for the ice, but that the governor might send him a little more at a time. “ He is afraid, sire,” replied the officer, “ that the siege may be long, and the ice fall short before it is over.”

Though gallantly defended, however, the siege of Lille did not prove very long. Five vigorous sallies having been made without success, and the Spanish army in the neighbourhood being too feeble to afford the place relief, the governor capitulated, after having been invested nearly a month, and having lost one-third of his garrison. The rest of the troops were conducted to Ypres, and Louis

entered the city on the same day that the garrison marched out.

During the whole siege Louis had followed absolutely the course he had proposed at first, and had in a manner applied himself to study the art of war under the great Turenne. That officer accompanied him to inspect all the various works, and the monarch made him explain fully the motive and effect of everything that he saw.

Scarcely had Lille fallen, when news was received by Louis that the Spanish army was advancing for the purpose of succouring the place. That army was commanded by the well-known Count de Marsin, of whom we have had to speak more than once in the wars of the Fronde. His conduct in regard to Barcelona had been so base, that Louis had refused to include him in the amnesty which had been granted to the other partisans of Condé; and he was now fully engaged in the Spanish service. But his forces were perfectly unequal to cope with those of the King, and as soon as he heard that Lille had fallen, he and the Prince de Ligne, who was joined with him in command, hastened to retreat. Louis, however, immediately detached Crequi and Bellefonds to attack the enemy, and followed, himself, at the head of a large body of cavalry. Crequi overtook the rear-guard, and Bellefonds, supported by the King, attacked the main body of the Spanish army. The numbers were very unequal; and though the Count de Marsin

did the best he could to maintain order in his retreat, a great deal of confusion and slaughter ensued. Besides killed and wounded, the Spaniards lost fifteen hundred men, who were taken by the French.

As soon as this affair was over, Louis left Turenne to proceed as he thought fit, and returned to Paris, where his presence was absolutely necessary, in order to direct the negotiations with foreign powers, which had become alarmed by his incursions into the Netherlands.

One or two circumstances connected with this campaign are worthy of notice. In the first place, Louis politicly avoided making any declaration of war, not alone for the purpose of taking the Spaniards by surprise, but to mark that he did not consider the act he was committing as any violation of the peace of the Pyrenees. He affected to look upon his proceedings as merely the act of taking possession of dominions which had fallen to him by succession, and by no means as an attack upon the crown of Spain. The young Queen with her court followed the monarch through his conquests, although she had been at first appointed regent of France during his absence; and, as the succession to which Louis pretended was claimed in her right, he caused her to be received as sovereign by the different towns that he captured; while she on her part promised them all the rights and immunities which they had ever held from the house of Burgundy.

Another thing to be remarked is, that Condé, the greatest and most uniformly successful general that had ever commanded the armies of France, was not present with the King, and remained unemployed at Chantilly. It has been generally stated that the King had never forgiven him his rebellion, and that he had continued in a sort of semi-disgrace ever since his return from Flanders. Such, however, was by no means the case; so far from it, he had been treated by Louis with particular distinction, had been one in all his most familiar parties at Fontainebleau, and had received every mark of favour and friendship from the king. Louis had quite forgiven him; but he had not learned to confide in him, and he had formed the determination, from the experience which the Fronde had given him, never to put a prince of one of the near collateral branches of the royal family at the head of his armies, unless compelled to do so by absolute necessity. A difficulty also existed, though it was afterwards overcome, in regard to the station of Turenne and Condé. Turenne, being marshal-general, commanded all the other marshals of France, in which capacity the Duc de Grammont, though much his senior, served under him. Condé could not receive an equal or superior rank without being made constable; and it was not yet ascertained how far either of those two great generals would be inclined to sacrifice military etiquette to the will of their sovereign.

The rapid conquests of the French King had naturally by this time alarmed the whole of Europe. Spain was the country which suffered immediate loss ; but danger most imminent was perceived both by England and Holland in the rapid aggrandizement of the young monarch. A cry was immediately raised, which was never afterwards appeased in Europe, that Louis was striving for universal dominion ; and De Witt now found that in the war with England, and in the great reliance he had placed on France, he had in some degree gone astray from his just course of policy. It was difficult, indeed, for him to follow it under the circumstances in which Holland was placed at the time.

The state of existence of the United Provinces themselves offered so many points peculiar and distinct from those to be found in the situation of any other nation, that we must pause for a moment to consider it, remembering, in the words of Ferrand, “ it was in effect at the Hague that were agitated the greatest objects which could influence the fate of Europe.” Still, to make use of the words of that comprehensive and philosophical writer, we must remember that “ the accessory part of that republic was in Europe, the principal was in the Indies :—its citizens, merchants of cheese or of tea at Amsterdam, were kings at Batavia. It had other rich territories in Africa and in America; so that there was a great extent from the centre to the extremities. Its true territories were in the three

quarters of the world ; in the fourth was alone the little space where the dominant metropolis of its colonies rose above the waters. In this fourth quarter it found itself surrounded by masses very differently united, and active in a very different manner from its own masses."

Holland had two enemies to fear : England, to whom lay exposed her commerce and her colonies ; France, from whom at any time she had to fear an invasion of her indefensible territory in Europe. Against England, Holland had no protection, except in her own maritime strength and in the support of France. Against France she had but one barrier,—the Spanish Netherlands. De Witt trusted somewhat too much to that barrier, and gave France facilities which were used to overthrow the barrier itself.

At the same time, however, we must remember that in many points the interests of France and Holland were absolutely united, and that it was difficult for De Witt to defend himself against England without paving the way for the conquests of France. As soon, however, as he saw those conquests undertaken and carried through with a rapidity which the world had never before witnessed, he naturally became alarmed, and looked round him for some means of preserving the barrier which was about to be thrown down.

It so happened, however, that at the very moment when the conquests of Louis in the Low Countries

had reached their highest point—when Lille had fallen, and a very few marches would have brought the French armies into the Dutch territory, there accidentally visited the Hague an English diplomatist, who had for some time entertained, it would seem, a vague and, as yet, unformed scheme for arraying several of the powers of Europe against the increasing preponderance of France.

This was the celebrated Sir William Temple, who, by the advice of the Marquis de Castel Rodrigo, visited De Witt on the 13th of September 1667, while passing through the Hague with his sister, Lady Giffard. In the interview which took place between them, the state of Europe was canvassed with great frankness on both sides: the necessity of the cordial co-operation of Holland with her late enemy England, was admitted on both sides; and the first germ of the celebrated triple alliance was evolved, in a promise from De Witt to send an ambassador to England, with instructions “to induce his majesty to enter into a common league for preserving the repose of Christendom, and securing one common safety in that of Flanders.”

The first idea thus clearly defined, the rapid mind of Temple ran hastily on to carry it to perfection: he suggested his plan to the ministers, received their approbation, visited and conferred with Castel Rodrigo at Antwerp, and was then instantly despatched to the Hague to carry his views into execution.

De Witt met him with candour; but France laboured strenuously to keep Holland and England from entering into an alliance which promised to put a stop to all Louis's ambitious views. The grand pensionary represented to Temple the long alliance of Holland and France; the benefits which the Dutch had received from that alliance; the danger of abandoning an old and tried friend, to unite with one who had so lately been an enemy; and he proposed, as a greater security to both parties, that Sweden, which had also been in strict alliance with France, should be called upon to join in the proposed treaty for ensuring the independence of the Netherlands. Temple immediately visited Count Dhona, the Swedish ambassador, and gained him to his views; and everything was agreed upon between the grand pensionary and the two ambassadors.

A difficulty still remained, however. By the constitution of the Provinces, the states general had not the power of concluding such treaties without referring them to the individual provinces. Temple did not hesitate to propose a violation in this respect of the constitution; for he well knew that if time were allowed for the French diplomatists to act, they would find means of bringing over some of the provinces to their party, and thus frustrate the negotiators in their object.

After considerable discussions, De Witt and Isbrant, as commissioners for secret affairs, agreed

to run the risk proposed, and on Monday the 23rd of January 1668, five days after it was at first proposed, the treaty known by the name of the “triple alliance” was signed at the Hague, by which it was agreed that Holland, England, and Sweden should use their utmost endeavours to oblige France and Spain to make peace upon certain terms. These terms were certainly very advantageous even to Louis himself; but, nevertheless, they offended the French monarch in the highest degree.

Proud of his power, his conquests, and his talents, Louis could not bear the dictation of what he conceived inferior powers. He pursued his object, however, and laboured to frustrate the efforts of those who opposed him with calm and steady determination. Using both military and diplomatic means, he strenuously endeavoured to prevent Portugal from concluding a peace with Spain; and even while the negotiations were going on at the Hague, he undertook an enterprise in the middle of winter which secured to him the advantage of an alternative, which he would not otherwise have possessed.

During the short campaign which had put the French monarch in possession of so many towns in the Netherlands, the Marquis of Louvois had constantly accompanied the army, and had displayed all his high qualities, all his vices, and all his foibles. With inexhaustible activity he had managed the administration of the army; he had examined

everything with his own eyes, he had applied himself to learn every particular detail of the service; but at the same time, with intrusive impertinence, springing from his egregious vanity, he had rendered himself obnoxious to every officer in the army, and had not even refrained from thwarting and opposing Turenne himself.

Turenne bore with him for a time with the patience of contempt; but at length his temper gave way, and he rebuked the young and conceited minister with the scorn which he deserved. It is generally supposed that the hatred which he conceived towards Turenne from that moment induced him to resolve upon calling Condé once more into activity, and that he intimated to the prince, in his retirement at Chantilly, that if he would suggest any brilliant scheme applicable to existing circumstances, the execution of it should be entrusted to himself.

Condé instantly sketched out a plan for the conquest of Franche Comté; Louvois laid it before the king, and Louis commanded the prince to put it in execution. Condé immediately proceeded to his government of Burgundy unaccompanied by any force, called together the states of the province, prolonged their deliberations on various pretexts, and affected to be entirely occupied on peaceful objects, while an army of twenty thousand men was secretly collected.

Louvois, in the mean while, carried on the war

of corruption amongst the magistracy of Franche Comté, and gained a sufficient number to insure such divisions as would prevent any serious resistance. When all was prepared, Condé suddenly put himself at the head of his troops, and marched into the county on the 4th of February. Besançon and Salins made scarcely any resistance, and Franche Comté was overrun in a few days. The only town which showed a determination to defend itself vigorously was Dole. Louis had by this time arrived at Dijon himself, and Condé besought him to advance and lay siege to Dole in person. The king hastened forward, and under his direction all the outworks of the town were carried by Condé; after which the city capitulated, without waiting for a regular siege. Gray and Joux surrendered as speedily, and in fourteen days the whole of Franche Comté had submitted. Louis conferred the government upon him who had really made the conquest, and returned to Paris, after having been absent from it only two-and-twenty days.

The Regent of Spain, indignant at the weakness and treachery of her officers, wrote to the Spanish Governor of Franche Comté, that the King of France had made a mistake, and should have sent his valets to take possession of the province, instead of marching against it himself. At the same time, however, she appealed to Germany for aid, but received none; and the commissioners of England, Holland, and Sweden, meeting at Aix-la-Chapelle, proceeded

to labour for the restoration of peace upon the terms which they had laid down as the basis of their mediation.

The conferences at Aix-la-Chapelle were of very little moment, compared with those which took place in Paris, where Van Beuningen, the Dutch ambassador, treated personally with Louis and his ministers. In negotiating, however, the ambassador from the States carried himself with so much haughtiness, affected so dictatorial a tone, and assumed so Roman a demeanour, that he added greatly to the indignation which Louis already felt towards the States of Holland for having dared to cross him in his path of conquest.

Voltaire assures us that Van Beuningen took a pleasure in opposing on every occasion the imperious loftiness of Louis; and that when Lionne asked him if he would not trust to the word of the King, he replied, “I am ignorant of what the King wishes to do; I only consider what he can do.”

The attitude assumed by the people of Holland itself was likewise domineering in the extreme. They raised troops; they formed a camp near Bergen-op-Zoom; they carried on negotiations with a number of different powers; and in a letter from D'Estrades of the 26th of April 1668, we see displayed distinctly the impression which their conduct had made upon Louis and his people.

"It is certain," he says, "that if his majesty by his great prudence had not terminated this business, the States would have brought a great war upon his hands, and that they would have employed the immense sums which they have in their country to maintain it. Thank God, however, things have taken a better course, and his majesty sees clearly what surely there is in the friendship and the alliance of the States; that is to say, that he must count upon them only as far as their own interests shall be consulted."

Louis, however, smothered his wrath; and it having been determined by the plenipotentiaries that either Franche Comté or the king's late acquisitions in Flanders should be restored to the Spanish crown, it was agreed between France and Spain that the district given up should be Franche Comté. The portion which was thus reserved to Louis was all that he himself could have desired, and all that either Spain or Holland ought to have withheld from him. He yielded a territory which Spain could not defend, which was shut up in the heart of his own dominions, and which had no communication whatsoever with the country upon which it was dependent for the time. Franche Comté he could re-conquer whenever it pleased him to undertake it; and instead of that district, he retained possession of a great part of Flanders, kept open the way into the Netherlands, and held in his hands many of those cities which Holland

had looked upon as so many barriers against his encroachments.

How this was managed, or why it was permitted, is difficult to say. By some accounts, we are told that Castel Rodrigo himself suggested to the Spanish government to choose Franche Comté, and leave French Flanders in the hands of Louis ; in the first place hoping thereby to mortify the Dutch ; and in the second place, believing that the ambitious spirit of Louis would soon lead him to farther aggressions, the consequence of which would be the interference of the neighbouring countries, and the restoration of the captured towns to Spain. The scheme,* however, is so visionary, and the design so shallow, that it is scarcely to be conceived any diplomatist should have been mad enough to entertain them for a moment. It is more than probable that a result so advantageous in every respect to France was brought about by the skill of the French diplomatists themselves. Lionne, Louvois, and Le Tellier were in constant communication with Van Beuningen in Paris ; Colbert de Croissy carried on the negotiations at Aix-la-Chapelle ; D'Estrades directed all his efforts to promote the French interests at the Hague ; and the result was, as we have shown, the most favourable to France we can conceive, and the most disadvantageous to Holland.

The conclusion of the treaty on such terms was

* Ramsay, *Vie de Turenne*.

indeed hastened by some menacing movements on the part of Louis himself,* who marched a considerable army towards the frontier, threatening to seize upon four of the strongest places of the Netherlands, unless a satisfactory arrangement was immediately made.†

While such events were proceeding in the North, a treaty of peace was in negotiation between Spain and Portugal. The court of France did all that it was possible to do, in order to prevent that treaty from being carried to a speedy conclusion; but nevertheless, after many difficulties, all the arrangements were made, and on the 13th of February 1668 the treaty was signed, and Portugal was declared a free and independent kingdom.

At the same time, a somewhat disgusting spectacle was exhibited to the world by the conduct of the Queen of Portugal, daughter of the Duke of

* Those movements have been totally misunderstood, or rather misrepresented. It has been said that Louis marched an army of one hundred thousand men into Flanders, that Condé entered Luxembourg with one corps, the Duke of Orleans approached Ostend with another, &c. &c. Nothing of the kind ever took place. Louis threatened to do all this, and caused some bodies of troops to march towards the frontier; but Condé remained in Franche Comté, the Duke of Orleans never stirred. This may be seen by the letter of D'Estrades, 12th April 1668. Louis was, in fact, bound by a suspension of arms not to act as has been represented, and on the 15th of April he renewed that suspension by treaty till the last day of May; and the definitive treaty of peace was signed on the 2nd of May.

† Letter of Lionne, dated April 27, 1668.

Nemours, who had been killed in a duel by his brother the Duke of Beaufort. Her husband, Alphonso, was brutal, and nearly insane; and with great skill and address she had obtained complete command of the people of Portugal. That command she now employed for the purpose of dethroning and confining her husband, and, with indecent haste, proceeded not only to marry another, but to choose the brother of the husband whom she repudiated, obtaining easily from the plastic court of Rome a dispensation for the daring act she was about to commit.* France supported her strenuously, and obtained a firm ally; and it was in vain that the Spaniards attempted to oppose the private acts of a queen whom they had not overcome in the field.

Before we proceed to notice the domestic occurrences which took place in France, it may be as well to follow out that train of political events which immediately succeeded to the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. No party probably imagined that the peace

* It was contended on the part of the Queen of Portugal that the marriage with her first husband was not complete; but Mademoiselle de Montpensier declares that in this assertion she directly contradicted herself. The Princess enters into the fact with too little regard for decency for the passage to be quoted at length here. She also lays the burden of arranging the whole of this discreditable business upon the Cardinal d'Estrées, who, she asserts, always arranged matters as they were agreeable to himself. She accuses him also of having married Mademoiselle de Nemours likewise to two husbands, the first being living when the second union took place.

would be durable, and every one prepared himself for a speedy renewal of the war ; while the different states of Europe looked round anxiously to see where the thunderbolt would fall. Every one regarded France as the cloud from which it was to issue ; but every one was uncertain of where and when Louis would choose to strike the blow ; and, in this state of uncertainty, each pursued a vacillating and unsteady course of policy, neither wishing to offend Louis by preparations for resistance, nor yet to be found unprepared in case he were already offended.

France, however, in the mean time, as Ferrand has justly observed, pursued steadily one undeviating line of policy : she had a great object in view from which she never deviated, and the uniform consistency of purpose which Louis displayed is one of the most remarkable points in his character. Holland, in the doubt and difficulty which surrounded her, now laboured eagerly to restrain the power of France, and even carried too far the negotiations for an object which was certain to call down the anger of the French king, while at the same time she made no sufficient preparations at home. She thus treated with the Empire and with Spain; nor did she attempt to conceal her negotiations with the different princes of Germany so effectually from the eyes of Louis as to escape his searching policy ; and he immediately took steps to counteract her proceedings. He commenced by negotiation, and struck the first strokes

by diplomacy. Nor were those strokes less successful than his arms had been. He detached from the alliance forming against him the Electors of Cologne and Hanover, and the Bishops of Munster, Osnabruck, and Strasbourg. Sweden too was gained over; the Emperor himself was occupied and rendered indifferent to the cause of the Dutch; and even with Spain Louis laboured, and not in vain.

The great object of his policy at this time, however, was to detach England from her alliance with Holland, in order that his navy, which under the wise management of Colbert was daily rising into importance, might not be crushed at once by the power of the two great maritime states.

England at this moment presented the lamentable picture of a country divided into various small but virulent parties, each hating the other with a mortal hatred, and thereby losing all power of benefiting the whole: a monarch and a ministry equally corrupt and degraded; and a parliament, though not subservient, yet rendered weak by the want of a general plan of action, and by the factions which divided the people. For some time the conduct of England towards Holland appeared sincere; but gradually all the honest ministers who had taken a share in that course of foreign policy which had brought about the triple alliances were excluded from the British cabinet, and that party, the initials of whose members' names formed the word *cabal*,

ruled the state. By them, however, in appearance, the same great objects were pursued, and more comprehensive and binding treaties were entered into for the purpose of putting a limit to the ambition of the French monarch.

But that course of degrading and iniquitous treachery which ended in making England break all her ties with Holland, violate her most solemn engagements, abandon her only sure policy, and leave the States a prey to Louis, after having induced them to incur his anger, was begun by Charles himself. Scarcely had the triple alliance been signed, when the King of England made a sort of apology to the French King for the compulsory means which he had agreed with Holland to use against him; and Louis soon perceived that though it might be difficult to bring over the English nation to his views, it would be easy to obtain anything from Charles II. At first he rather affected to hold back from the King of England, and treated him with some degree of coldness; but after a time Colbert de Croissy was sent over to England in the character of ambassador, and announced to Turenne that he "had at last made the English ministers feel all the extent of his Majesty's liberality."

What the means were which he took to produce this effect have been very clearly ascertained; and there can be no question that the financial capacity of Jean Baptiste Colbert greatly contributed to

render this part of his brother's diplomacy effectual. Little doubt, in short, can exist that the British cabinet were purchased in a body ; but Louis entrusted to a still more skilful and powerful negotiator than Colbert, the task of putting the last stroke to the new alliance with England. To detach the king of that country from his connexion with Holland was not the sole object of the French monarch ; he strove for much more, and, well aware of the unprincipled weakness of Charles II, hoped and expected to engage him on the side of France in making war upon his friends and allies.

Although Charles was unconscious that there was such a thing as virtue, and consequently did not conceive that there could be anything like shame attached to violating his most solemn engagements, he might well fear opposition from his parliament and his people in the dishonourable course he was about to pursue. In order to overcome all such apprehensions, or to place before him equivalents which would induce him to brave them, some time was necessary, and some skill ; and it would appear that while Colbert de Croissy laboured in London to smooth the way with the ministers, a secret negotiation was carried on between Charles and his sister Henrietta, who had become Duchess of Orleans. This princess's name has not in general been mixed with the transaction till the year 1670 ; but it is clear that from an early period in 1669 she kept up, by direction of her brother-in-law Louis XIV,

a constant correspondence with Charles, through the medium of Ruvigny and Buckingham, of which correspondence Arlington himself was not aware till a later period.

In the mean while, various signs of tergiversation upon the part of England struck and alarmed the Dutch. Delays, objections, and excessive demands were made in regard to the maritime treaty between the two nations. Hesitations respecting the subsidies promised, and the forces to be brought into the field under particular circumstances, but, more than all, the evident fact that Sir William Temple, the British ambassador at the Hague, was himself puzzled by the conduct of the English ministers, and was in the dark with regard to their object, convinced the States of the United Provinces that something was going wrong. The method which they pursued, however, to elucidate the matter, and to force England to adhere to its engagements, was unfortunate, both because it failed in its object,—there being no bounds to the treachery of Charles II, and no guarantee in anything to which he might be driven,—and also because it brought forth into a strong light the ~~real~~ commercial jealousy which had ever existed, (notwithstanding treaties and engagements on the part of Holland,) towards the growing trade of France, and thus afforded to Louis XIV. the only just and reasonable cause which he had for making war upon the republic. The true object and error of Holland,

and the true object and motive of Charles, are clearly displayed in a few words in Courtenay's excellent Memoir of Sir William Temple.

Van Beuningen was sent over to England on a mission for the purpose of ascertaining the temper of the English court; and Courtenay goes on to say, *a further object was the conjoint prohibition of French commodities, a favourite project of De Witt.* In a letter which the same author gives from Arlington to Temple dated February 4th 1670, are the following words:—"And if he, the Emperor, be thus shy with all his concerns and dependencies upon Spain, what ought our master to be with his necessities and the little security of being relieved in them by the parliaments?"

Thus, in fact, the principal and real object of Holland was to prohibit French commodities in England and in the United Provinces; and by entertaining such an object, and labouring for such a purpose, she afforded Louis a legitimate cause and pretext for war. The object of Charles II. was to relieve his necessities, and to obtain supplies for his pleasures, without applying to his parliament for aid. Thus proceeded the affairs of France, Holland, and England, till the spring of the year 1670, when Louis XIV, with his Queen and his whole court, set out to make a splendid progress through his new acquisitions in the Low Countries.

Nothing could be more magnificent than the re-

tinue with which the French monarch took his departure from St. Germain towards the end of April in that year. Everything that was beautiful, everything that was gay, everything that was witty, everything that was splendid, followed him on the way ; and Pelisson, who accompanied the king, declares, in writing to Mademoiselle de Scuderi, " It is not possible to tell you how large the court is ; it is not such either at St. Germain or at Paris. All the world have followed it."

The hurry and confusion which this affluence occasioned produced nothing but new mirth and enjoyment. Commissaries for mending the roads preceded the royal train ; the King himself decided all disputes that occurred as to precedence and lodgings, and his decision left not a word to be said. Louis displayed more than his usual urbanity and liberality ; and never did he appear more completely the splendid monarch, never did he more successfully cover despotism with magnificence, than in his progress through the Low Countries.

Almost all the principal towns were at the time undergoing a complete change in the fortifications under the direction of Vauban ; and the son of the Constable of Castile, who had succeeded Castel Rodrigo in the government of the Low Countries, having been sent to meet the French monarch at Douai, received an order from Louis himself, addressed to the commanders of Ath and other places,

to show him and a skilful engineer that accompanied him the whole of the works without any reserve whatever.

One or two other events also took place in the course of the king's progress which are worthy of notice, not only as displaying the character of Louis himself, but the character which the people had assumed since the beginning of his reign. Everything that was worthy of notice Louis visited on his way, and caused almost all the court to accompany him on these occasions, whether to see the foundries of cannon at Douai, to visit the forts upon the Scarpe, or to inspect the manufactories of tapestry.

At Lille a sight was presented which the court of France had rarely seen. The infantry regiment of Turenne lined the street through which the king entered ; and at its head, on foot, with a pike in his hand, appeared that great officer himself, acting merely the part of colonel. He had taken great pains, it seems, to learn the proper manner of saluting the monarch with the pike ; and, strange to say, Turenne, who had so well learned to make use of every weapon in actual warfare, could scarcely accomplish the complimentary movements required after having practised them a whole night in his nightcap.

Another sight which struck the court, and had certainly a great influence on the service, was the breaking of a French officer of the guards by the

King himself, at the head of his squadron. It would seem, that he had taken a fancy to a dog belonging to one of the peasantry, which the man had refused to sell, when the officer presuming on his station, had struck him. The facts came to the knowledge of the King, and at Courtrai he ordered his guards to be drawn up, called the officer before him, and dismissed him from the service with disgrace.

At Lille, however, in the midst of fêtes and entertainments given or received by the king and the court, it was suddenly announced that the Duchess of Orleans, who was one of the greatest ornaments of the brilliant circle that accompanied Louis, was about to take her departure for England. To almost the whole of the court these tidings came suddenly, and it was generally supposed that she had taken this hasty determination from her proximity to her brother Charles II. and her desire to see him. She set off with a gay party of ladies, promising to be absent only for a few days, and proceeding by the way of Dunkirk, set sail for Dover, where she landed after a long and troublesome passage. Charles II. himself had arrived the day before with a considerable party, and everything passed apparently in rejoicings and festivity.

In the midst of these rejoicings, however, the last stroke was put to the most disgraceful proceeding that is to be found in the history of our country; and Charles, bought by the gold of Louis,

signed a treaty at Dover on the 22nd of May 1670, by which treaty, to use the forcible words of a modern writer, “the King of England became a dependent and pensioner of France, and promised to make war upon his newly-recovered and now zealous ally,” the Dutch Republic. But a few days before, he had ratified what are called the treaties of guarantee, consort, and subsidy, with the other members of the triple alliance, well knowing at the very time that he was about to commit the notorious breach of faith which he now consummated.

Henrietta, after spending a few days in the society of her brother, left behind her, as a tie upon the treacherous and dishonest monarch, one of the fair ladies of her train, named Querouailles, who willingly undertook the post of royal harlot, and became notorious in history as the Duchess of Portsmouth. She then returned to France, bearing with her, in the treaty we have mentioned, the act of her brother’s disgrace, and conveying to Louis the certainty of executing his designs against Holland without the slightest interruption.

The Empire, as we have before said, was occupied with the disturbances in Hungary, and gained by the negotiations of France; the petty princes of the Rhine were bought, intimidated, or flattered into an alliance with the French King; Spain was impotent; and England was an accessory to the aggression which Louis was about to commit.

The negotiations which had been carried on by

the intervention of Henrietta had been kept a most profound secret. They had been revealed to none but two persons in whom Louis thought he could place every degree of confidence : the first of these was Turenne, the second Louvois. Henrietta herself had strongly objected to the secret being confided to the latter, representing to the King that the various violent passions by which he was moved might render him indiscreet. Louis, however, had been his guarantee, and not without cause. What was the surprise of Henrietta then, when, returning successful from her expedition, she found her husband enraged against her in the greatest degree on account of the very negotiations which she had been carrying on, and of his exclusion from all share in the secret ! Not contented with rebuking his wife, the Duke of Orleans proceeded to complain bitterly to Louis of the want of confidence with which he had been treated by all parties.

Louis was thunderstruck at finding the whole transaction discovered, and seeing Turenne a few minutes afterwards, he told him that Louvois had betrayed their secret. We must remember, that Louvois had, even at this time, become the scarcely concealed enemy of Turenne ; but that great and noble-minded man at once sheltered him from the indignation of the King, by taking the blame upon himself, and avowing that he was alone in fault. He had conceived a passion, it would seem, for the

Marquise de Coatquen, a beautiful woman attached to the household of the Duchess of Orleans, and had, in one of those unguarded moments from which the greatest men are not always free, revealed to her the important secret which had been confided to him: she again, in love, it is supposed, with the Chevalier de Lorraine, had communicated the tidings to him, who revealed the whole again to the Duke of Orleans, whose friend and favourite he was.

Turenne confessed at once to the King his share in the discovery; and Louis, in admiration for his candour and generosity, pardoned the fault he had committed. Turenne, however, never pardoned himself, and to the last day of his life showed the keenest sensibility upon the subject. Some years afterwards, we are told, the Chevalier de Lorraine, sitting with him alone, began to speak with him upon the subject, when Turenne stopped him by exclaiming, “Let us begin, my friend, by putting out the lights.”

The King did not treat so mildly the other persons who had been engaged in communicating the secret to his brother. Several who had taken a part in the business, and who had irritated the mind of the Duke of Orleans against his wife, were banished from the kingdom; and the Chevalier de Lorraine was sent for a time to the famous prison of Pierre Enscize.

The domestic troubles, however, of the house of the Duke of Orleans were only destined to be

brought to an end by the tragic death of his unhappy wife. That she was guilty in various respects, there can be little doubt; and that she was as light and unprincipled as she was beautiful, graceful, and gentle, seems to be equally certain. Her health had been injured by frequent miscarriages; but, though delicate, she seemed in no degree likely to terminate her earthly career so rapidly. It would appear that she had in some degree made her peace with her husband, and on the 24th of June, shortly after her return from England, she proceeded with him to St. Cloud, where for a day or two she seemed to those who surrounded her to be somewhat out of health; but on Sunday the 29th she was better, and remained with her husband in conversation for a long time. Their communication, however, appears to have been bitter; for she complained to Madame de la Fayette, immediately after, of being very much grieved.

She overcame her vexation, however, dined as usual, and after dinner lay down on a pile of cushions, and, in conversing gaily with her attendants, fell asleep. While she slept, her countenance suddenly changed; and waking shortly after, and drinking a glass of succory water, she was suddenly seized with violent pain, which obliged her to be put to bed. Her agony then became terrible; she could not lie for a moment in one position; and, exclaiming that she was dying, that she was poisoned, she ordered her confessor to be

immediately sent for. She embraced her husband, and assured him that though she knew he had long ceased to love her, she was not in any degree guilty towards him; still declaring that she was poisoned, and demanding strongly that they should give her oil and antidotes. This was at length done, but without effect, and her sickness proceeded rapidly.

The indifference, however, of many of the persons about her, who should have been the most interested in her situation, offers the strongest confirmation of her suspicions. The King and the Royal Family were alarmed at the news of the Duchess's danger, and Mademoiselle de Montpensier proceeded to St. Cloud with Louis XIV. The unhappy girl was by that time nearly in the agonies of death, lying upon her bed with her hair dishevelled, her temples sunk, and her colour that of a corpse. Nevertheless, the princess who recounted afterwards in her memoirs the scene which she witnessed when she entered, declares that the people in the room where she lay were coming, going, talking, and laughing, as if she had been in a very different condition. Her very physician himself seemed perfectly inactive; and the only one who really exerted himself to save her was the King, who insisted that something should be done. It was too late, however, and after having confessed herself, she retracted her assertion in regard to the poison, fearing to cast suspicion upon innocent

people. She then took the sacrament, and very shortly after died in great agony, at half-past two o'clock in the morning.

The strange circumstances which accompanied the death of this princess have left a strong impression upon the minds of men that she was poisoned; and the differences of opinion displayed by the surgeons who opened the body have but served to confirm the belief. Some asserted that there were sufficient traces of disease to account for her rapid dissolution; others declared that no such traces were visible. England was satisfied by the account given by the court of France regarding the death of Henrietta; and it was used as an argument, that Louis himself was more interested than any one in investigating accurately the cause of such an event in the heart of the Royal Family. But the opposite argument might perhaps have been urged with greater force, and men might believe that the King of France was interested to smother all inquiry when his own brother was not free from suspicion.

The eyes of all men were for a time fixed with doubt upon the young Duke of Orleans; but the testimony of Madame de la Fayette, an eye-witness, who writes with an air of candour which is not to be mistaken, is favourable to that prince. Knowing the unhappy manner in which he and his wife lived together, she kept her eyes fixed upon him, she says, while the princess declared that she was

poisoned. She could not discover, however, any change in his countenance which could induce her to suppose him guilty ; and he immediately ordered some of the succory water of which the princess had drunk to be given to a dog, to ascertain whether it was wholesome or not.

Various anecdotes were afterwards brought forward to inculpate him, but are unworthy of any credit ; and suspicion attached to several persons, amongst whom was the Countess of Soissons, who had lately been at open enmity with Henrietta. Other events afterwards took place in the history of the countess, which we shall notice some way farther on, and which tend to render her innocence of the death of Henrietta, even now, an object of great doubt to the eye of the historian. St. Simon fixes the guilt upon the Chevalier de Lorraine, and names one of the domestics of the Duke of Orleans as the instrument employed actually to administer the poison. His whole account, however, bears within itself the strongest proof of being nothing but the dream of a malicious imagination ; and it would not be difficult to prove, that many of the circumstances detailed by him are incompatible with the ascertained facts.

CHAPTER VII.

Farther preparations for war with Holland.—Conquest of Lorraine.—Invasion of Holland.—England makes war upon Holland.—Changes of Louis's military arrangements.—Profuse liberality of Louis.—Various successes.—Passage of the Rhine.—Rapid conquests.—Positions of the French corps.—Alarm of the Dutch.—Louis's unreasonable demands.—Indignation and resolution of the Dutch.—The sluices opened.—Faults of Louis and of some of his officers.—Louis returns to Paris.—Murder of the brothers De Witt.

IN the same year which saw the death of Henrietta of England, and in which a treaty was concluded between Charles II. and Louis XIV, the French monarch advanced another step towards the conquest of Holland by once more taking possession of Lorraine. The pretext which he made use of was, that the Duke Charles, unfaithful to the treaties which existed between him and France, was labouring to form alliances with other powers, either dangerous or detrimental to that country. This, however, as all the world saw, was but a pretext; and the real object was to open from the side of Lorraine a free passage towards Maestricht, and the adjacent parts of the Dutch territory. The reduction of Lorraine was but the matter of a few weeks. Crequi was despatched with a *corps d'armée*

to seize upon the principal towns and put garrisons therein. Epinal, Chattè, and Longroy were taken after scarcely any resistance; and the unfortunate Duke retired to Cologne; but being pursued there by the policy of Louis, who was negotiating with the bishop of that city, he ultimately took refuge in Frankfort, in order to wait for some new change in his varied fate.

The whole of the year 1671 was occupied in concluding the negotiations already begun with the different powers in the neighbourhood of Holland, as one great object of Louis XIV. and of Louvois was, to gain such a footing amongst the small principalities of the Rhine as to enable them to establish in the proximity of the scene of war those great magazines which formed a principal feature in the military policy of the minister at war. The chief persons employed by Louis on this occasion were the two princes of the house of Furstemberg, who served him zealously, with the Elector of Cologne, an old and incapable man whom they may be said to have governed.

Christopher Van Gaalen, Bishop of Munster, wanted no inducements but the approbation of the King of France to aid in the war against Holland; but it was not without more difficulty than had been anticipated, that Louis obtained two towns upon the Rhine for the purpose of forming magazines, which were soon filled with every kind of munition of war. The only prince who seemed

determined to oppose the ambition of the French King was the Elector of Brandenberg, who, instead of yielding to the solicitations of Louis, resisted all temptations, and entered into a treaty with Holland, by which he agreed to furnish the States with a considerable body of troops.

The length of all these transactions gave time for adverse diplomacy to act. The negotiations of Louis at Madrid had been for some time successful; but the celebrated Dutch negotiator Van Beverning having been sent to the capital of Spain, frustrated all the efforts of the Marquis of Villars, and obtained for the States a promise of assistance both in troops and money in case they were attacked by France.

The probability of an attack being made upon them, indeed, was every day increasing, and consternation began to spread throughout the whole United Provinces. Van Groot,* the Dutch ambassador in Paris, was directed to inquire into the motives of the menacing attitude assumed by the French king. But every reply only tended to show Louis's determination of invading Holland; and at the same time all doubts respecting the intentions of England were removed both by the terms in which she replied to the remonstrances of De Witt, and by the recall of Sir William Temple from the Hague, his place being supplied by Downing, the ancient enemy of the grand pensionary.

* Otherwise Grotius.

The peril of Holland was now evidently extreme. Even when supported by France, she had found it scarcely possible to maintain herself in a maritime war against England alone ; but now that she was menaced by Louis on the land and by Charles at sea, nothing but the most unanimous exertions on the part of the whole population could have afforded any means of resisting the overwhelming force about to be opposed to her. No such unanimity, however, existed in Holland : two opposite opinions, as we have before shown, had long divided that country ; the upholders of the one supporting the family of Orange in claims to the Stadholderate, and other offices and dignities which had become too nearly hereditary in that house ; the followers of the other upholding the purer form of republicanism which was advocated by John and Cornelius De Witt, and opposing the elevation of the young Prince of Orange, not from any personal dislike to himself or to his family, but from an apprehension of trusting too great authority to any one individual. By a strange combination of circumstances, into which it is unnecessary to inquire, the claims of the house of Orange, which approached the principles of a hereditary monarchy, had been strenuously advocated by England, the constitution of which country approached very nearly to a republic ; and the party of De Witt, which was of the purest republican character, had derived its greatest strength from an alliance with

Louis XIV, the most despotic sovereign in Europe. These contrarieties, as well as the other divisions which existed, and which we have already noticed, not only tended to paralyse the efforts of Holland, both parties being opposed in the present war by those who had been their own friends, as well as by those who had been their enemies, but also proved the ruin of De Witt, who was placed throughout in what the French call, a false position.

The first efforts of the Dutch were directed to turn away the wrath of Louis; and, at length, the states general, in a humble tone, demanded distinctly whether the preparations which he was making were destined to act against them, his faithful allies,—and if so, what was the offence they had committed. Louis replied haughtily, that he should make what use of his troops his dignity required, and would render an account to no one. His ministers, as their only answer to the demand of what offence Holland had committed, cited some idle paragraphs published in the journals of the day; some vainglorious medals struck in the United Provinces, and said to be offensive to the king, and some rash and hasty words spoken on various occasions by Van Beuningen.

It certainly would have been much better and more to the purpose if Louvois and Colbert had replied, that the King of France was determined to punish the Dutch for attempting to ruin his commerce by excluding all French goods from

England and Holland, rather than that he was angry with them because they had called him “the King of reviews.” The ministers, however, thought fit to conceal the weighty motives of the war, and put forth the frivolous ones; and the Dutch perceiving that there was no hope of turning away the storm, prepared to meet it as best they might.

The self-confidence, which the Dutch had but too frequently displayed in former times, and which had been greatly increased by the dictation that they were permitted to exercise at Aix-la-Chapelle, had prevented not only the general but the provincial governments from employing those precautions which might have impeded the progress of Louis, even if they did not secure the country against his ultimate success. Though De Witt had kept a large maritime force in active preparation—though the fleets were ready, well manned and provided, the state of Holland on the land side was lamentable. A few troops had been raised for the purpose of aiding Spain in the protection of the Low Countries, but a part of these had been disbanded as soon as the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle was concluded; and for a long time De Witt and every other statesman in Holland shut their eyes to the fact that the coming war was to be carried on by land.

When it could no longer be doubted that such was the case, hasty levies were made, and some energy displayed in putting the long-neglected for-

tresses in repair. An army, nominally of seventy thousand men, was collected with all haste ; but the numbers were fictitious : and what could a force of raw recruits, lax in discipline, unaccustomed to warfare, and commanded by inexperienced officers, do against the whole forces of Louis XIV ?

In the mean while, the proceedings of the republican party in the States were embarrassed by the claims and aspirations of the house of Orange. The young prince, afterwards so famous in history as William III. of England, already showed that cold, prudent, ambitious, and unscrupulous mind, which was his distinguishing characteristic through life. His partisans were daily increasing ; six out of the seven provinces he might be said to have gained to his interests ; and in the province of Holland itself his influence was daily increasing.

The aggression of the King of France, with whom De Witt had always maintained a strict alliance, served greatly to injure the party of the grand pensionary in the eyes of the people ; and the Orange faction now laboured diligently to increase and propagate the dissatisfaction felt at the policy of the republicans by every means just and unjust. Charges of peculation were urged against the pensionary, vague rumours of evil designs on his part and on that of his brother were circulated amongst the people ; and, in the mean while, the prince offered to mediate with his uncle the King of England, in order to withdraw him from the alliance

with France, provided the States would confer upon the chief of the house of Orange the offices held by his ancestors. He first obtained that of captain-general, but the Stadholderate was refused to him ; and the fact of being denied part of his claims afforded a fair pretext for not urging very actively his intercession with Charles. His mediation proved of no avail ; but as the danger and the terror of the States became more and more immediate, the office of Admiral was conferred upon him also ; all that De Witt was able to obtain being a decree by which the union of the posts of Stadholder and Admiral was declared impossible.

The republican party might now be said to be overthrown ; but while these intrigues were taking place, the defence of the country was neglected ; so that decayed fortresses, feebly garrisoned, ill provided, and commanded by cowardly or injudicious officers, were all the barriers that Holland could oppose to the invader when he began his march, if we except an army of twenty-five thousand men, which was the utmost extent of the really effective force that the States could bring into the field. A small Spanish corps was indeed hastening towards Holland, but it was far too insignificant to affect even in the slightest degree the event of the war.

Such was the condition of the country about to be invaded when Louis put himself at the head of his armies. If the Dutch had shown a lamentable

want of foresight in neglecting all preparation for a war which had been visibly overhanging them for more than two years, Louis, on the contrary, had prepared for it on a scale of splendour and expense which savoured a good deal of ostentation, and which inflicted bitter pain on the mind of Colbert. That great minister not only saw the immediate exhaustion and ultimate embarrassment of the finances from the expenses of that war itself, but beheld afar, with the prophetic eye of true philosophy the long train of evils which that one ambitious step would entail upon his sovereign and his country. He could do nothing to stop it, however ; fifty millions of francs were expended merely in preparations before the monarch set out ; and while Colbert laboured to insure such resources as would enable his master to march forward without a check, Louvois displayed his extraordinary genius for the details of the commissariat. The establishment and preparation of vast magazines were completed, stores of every kind were accumulated on the Rhenish frontier of Holland, and an army of an hundred and twelve thousand of the best soldiers in Europe were collected under Condé, Turenne, Luxembourg, and Vauban,—generals who may have been equalled, but seldom if ever surpassed.

An auxiliary force of between twenty and thirty thousand men hung upon the banks of the Rhine ; the most severe and judicious discipline insured regularity of efforts and mechanical precision to the

whole of the vast body thus assembled; Fourilles inspected the cavalry; and Martinet, in perfecting the discipline of the infantry, left behind him a name for severity which was in some degree just. He had already, however, done no slight service to the French army by the introduction of the bayonet into some of the infantry regiments; and the strictness and regularity which he preserved, on the present occasion, were of great benefit to Louis in his invasion of Holland, where it was not the king's object at all to irritate the peasantry as he marched on towards the capital.

Besides these great military preparations, the marine, which was now under the direction of Colbert, was in a state to co-operate vigorously with that of England, and a considerable fleet under the Vice-admiral D'Estrées was ready in the commencement of the war to join that commanded by the Duke of York.

To the last moment the Dutch endeavoured by negotiation to avert the blow; and in January 1672, a very submissive letter was presented by the States to the King of France. But it produced no effect; and so false were many of the Dutch themselves to the interests of their country, that a considerable part of the stores and ammunition, destined to supply the army employed against them, was bought in Holland by the agents of Louvois.

The first stroke of the war was struck by England. No positive declaration of hostilities had

been made, and Great Britain and the United Provinces were actually at peace, when, on the 14th of March 1672, Admiral Holmes attacked the Dutch admirals convoying through the Channel the rich Smyrna fleet ; but though the Dutch ships of war were infinitely inferior to the English, their manœuvres were so skilful as to disappoint Holmes of his prey. Only six of the Smyrna fleet were taken, and this commencement of the war might be considered as a defeat on the part of England. The justice or injustice of Holmes's attack upon the Dutch fleet has been very much discussed ; and it has been defended, on the ground that no declaration of war can be expected from a party injured. But those who make this defence are bound to show that Charles had been injured ; and they must also remember, that England was actually treating with Holland at the time ; and that the very pretence used by Holmes to justify himself, namely, that the Dutch had refused the salute to the English fleet, involved one of the questions under discussion between the two countries.

A declaration of war immediately followed a transaction, which certainly casts as little honour on our national good faith as Charles's notorious breach of his most solemn engagement.

No sooner was war declared, than Louis began his march, with his army divided into three grand bodies ; the first of which was commanded by the

King himself, with his brother the Duke of Orleans and Turenne under him; the second was commanded by the Prince de Condé, with, under his command, Marshals Humières and Bellefonds; the third was placed under the command of Crequi; a minor corps was detached under the Duke of Luxembourg, in order to support the Bishop of Munster in his attack upon Holland from the side of Westphalia; and a fifth detached body, under the Marquis de Nancré, consisting of about twelve thousand men, kept Flanders in awe from the side of Ath.

Scarcely, however, had these dispositions been made, when Louis was obliged to change them altogether, an event which delayed his advance for some time. As it was probable that all the corps, except those under Nancré and Luxembourg, might in the course of the war be re-united, it became necessary to settle the order of command, and Louis announced that should such be the case when he was absent, the command in chief remained first with the Royal Family in their rank, the Duke of Orleans being generalissimo in the King's absence, and Condé commander-in-chief in the absence of both. After him Turenne was appointed to take the command as marshal-general of France. No sooner was this order published than Humières, Bellefonds, and Crequi, though the two first were amongst the youngest marshals in France, notified

that they would not receive commands from Turenne, asserting that French marshals were only under the orders of the King himself.

Louis was not a monarch to be disobeyed ; and he at once dismissed and exiled the three officers who presumed to oppose him. Instead of keeping Turenne with him, as he had intended, to assist him with his counsels, he placed him at the head of that corps which had been given to Crequi ; Condé retained the command of the division which had been before assigned to him ; and the troops of Luxembourg were divided, in order to form, with some detachments from the other divisions, a fourth corps of the great army, under the Count de Chamilli, the old and tried adherent of the Prince de Condé, whom he had served with such skill and zeal even against the king himself. Thus, at the head of three corps of the French army appeared Condé and his two particular adherents, Luxembourg and Chamilli ; the object of which arrangement was supposed to be, to prevent the famous Count de Marsin, equally attached to that prince, from putting himself at the head of the Dutch forces.

This new arrangement having been made, Louis marched on, and approached Maestricht. It would appear that the king's first intention was to besiege that city ; but a large Dutch and Spanish force having been thrown into it, and the Rhinegrave showing every disposition to defend it vigorously,

it was evident that much time might be consumed before its walls. Louvois informed the king that he had received certain information that the provinces towards the Rhine were quite unprepared for resistance; and that the only force to oppose him was the small army of the Prince of Orange, encamped upon the banks of the Yssel. Condé arrived at the camp while these circumstances were under consideration, and his advice was merely so to mask Maestricht as to prevent any efforts on the part of the garrison, and to march on at once towards Amsterdam.* He showed that much more would be gained by this plan of proceeding, and that Maeseyk, which had in the mean time been taken by Turenne, together with a fortress called Fauquemont, and the small town of Biset, would completely keep Maestricht in check. The King yielded to this reasoning; a bridge of boats was thrown over the Meuse, and the whole army crossed and marched towards the Rhine, for the purpose of pushing on as fast as possible into the heart of the enemy's country.

The magazines which had been established in the territories of the Elector of Cologne now came into play, and were of the greatest service; and,

* Ramsay, on the strength of the history of the Abbé Rague-net, declares that Condé proposed to besiege Maestricht, and that it was only the advice of Turenne which induced Louis to march forward. But others, who had every opportunity of knowing, assert that the proposal came from Condé even before the king asked him his opinion.

marching on from place to place as if on a party of pleasure, Louis saw town after town surrender to him with scarcely any resistance. Orsoi, Rheinberg, Burich, Wesel, and Emeric surrendered one after another to different bodies of the French with scarcely any resistance; and day by day the French monarch advanced nearer and nearer to Amsterdam, while the Prince of Orange, unable to strike a single stroke for the defence of the country, retired instead of advancing, and endeavoured, on the other side of the Yssel, to construct some lines which would enable him, at all events, to maintain that part of the country against the enemy.

Louis, in the mean time, disarmed the inhabitants of the country through which he passed, by the air of liberality and kindness which he assumed. Gold flowed around him in profusion; everything was bought that the Dutch were willing to sell, and there can be no doubt that towns and fortresses, perhaps whole provinces themselves, entered as articles of trade into the commerce which the Dutch carried on with the army of the French king.

After having followed the course of the Rhine for a considerable way, the French monarch determined to pass that river with his whole army, and a ford was sought for near the spot where the Yssel séparates from the Rhine. The season had been extremely dry, and in many parts the river seemed fordable; but still it offered sufficient obstruction

to enable a small force to defend it against a much larger army. A handful of cavalry, however, and two regiments of infantry were all that appeared at any time upon the banks of the river, and not the slightest measures were taken to oppose the passage of the royal army.

Nevertheless, the intention of the monarch was kept profoundly secret; and he himself set out from the main body of the army late in the evening of the 11th of June, taking with him a large body of the heavy cavalry. The intention of Louis was to throw a bridge of boats across, and to pass the river himself at a spot which had been fixed upon, opposite one of the old Dutch toll-houses which had been erected on the bank. Once having passed, it would be easy to maintain possession of the opposite side, till the rest of the army could follow.

The Prince de Condé accompanied him, and at about three o'clock in the morning, the King with his household troops arrived opposite the toll-house. A ford was found by the Count de Guiche, who eagerly proposed to dispense with the bridge of boats; and, though Condé, who had learned that the Dutch general Wurtz was on the opposite bank with a small force, but hourly expected reinforcements, advised the construction of the bridge by the copper pontons which had been prepared, the impetuosity of the court and the eagerness of the king prevailed.

Some boats were brought to the spot; but the cavalry began at once to cross by the ford. The first who passed was the Count de Guiche himself at the head of a body of cuirassiers. In the centre of the river, for the space of about twelve or fifteen yards, the stream, though greatly reduced in volume by the long drought, was too deep to be passed without swimming the horses; and as they were in the midst, a squadron of Dutch cavalry, amounting to about three hundred horse, supported by a body of about nine hundred infantry, which had been seen on the banks of the river since daybreak, charged into the water to meet the first party of the French.

The Dutch infantry at the same moment opened a severe fire upon the cuirassiers, who for an instant began to waver. The Count de Guiche, however, and some volunteers who were with him, animated them by their words and their examples; the cannon on the French side of the river opened upon the handful of Dutch, the French cavalry poured on into the stream, and the enemy were obliged to give way, still keeping up a firm countenance and a severe fire upon the French.

The garde-du-corps of the king passed in a firm squadron without any loss; but Louis himself, much to the surprise of many who were present, remained for a length of time on the southern bank, and at last took advantage of one of the boats, and thus crossed the river. Almost all the principal

officers did the same; and it is said that Condé, having himself the gout, and fearing cold water to his feet more than all the musket-balls he had so often encountered, persuaded the king, who proposed to cross at the head of the guards, to make use of the boat, knowing very well that if Louis himself swam the river, he could not avoid following him.

Several of the French officers were wounded severely, and several were killed; but the death of Condé's own nephew was the event which caused the greatest regret of the day. The young Duke of Longueville, eager to distinguish himself, had been absent reconnoitring when the king left the camp.* He returned excessively fatigued, but finding what had occurred, set off at full speed for the spot where the passage of the Rhine was taking place. Arriving at the moment that the prince, his uncle, was about to cross the river in the boat, he cast himself into it with him, and passed over at a moment when the greater part of the Dutch infantry having retreated, a few hundred men had got themselves entangled amongst the hedges on the other side of the river, and were nearly surrounded

* I have taken my account of the passage of the Rhine from Pelisson and from the Abbé de Choisy. The first was not an eye-witness; though Voltaire asserts he was, in direct opposition to Pelisson's own letter, which proves the contrary. He was, however, in the camp, and made it his chief object to collect all the information he could. The Abbé de Choisy was an eye-witness.

by a body of the French volunteers. The Dutch had made a sort of fortress of the field, the hedges of which surrounded them, but having been summoned to surrender, were laying down their arms under a promise of quarter, when the young Duke of Longueville and the Duke D'Enghein, between whom a strong rivalry existed, rushed on to the spot, followed by several other young noblemen, and attempted to force their way in upon the Dutch, crying “ Kill them, kill them !— no quarter, no quarter !”

The Dutch immediately seized their muskets again, and fired upon their assailants. The Duke of Longueville received five balls in the body, and fell dead upon the spot, justly punished for conduct equally cruel and imprudent.

At this moment, in advancing to remedy the faults of his son and nephew, Condé was wounded by a pistol-shot in the arm, the first really severe wound which he had ever suffered ; and he was thus disabled, for some time, from taking any active share in the war.

The rest of the Dutch soldiers were killed or dispersed; but there cannot be the slightest doubt that had a larger force been present on the part of Holland, and had the troops of the States acted with the same courage and resolution which was displayed by the little band under the walls of the toll-house, the passage of the Rhine would not have been effected by Louis without very severe loss.

Even as it was, the list of killed on the part of France presented an amount, at least four times greater than the estimated loss of the Dutch; but whether youth and inexperience were the cause; or, as some have supposed, the desire of ruining utterly and for ever the republican party in the country; or again, the restraint put upon him by the presence of deputies from the States in his camp, William of Orange, though unquestionably a good officer and a brave and determined man, made no effort to impede the advance of Louis, and, abandoning his entrenchments on the Yssel, retreated behind Utrecht as soon as Louis had crossed the Rhine.

Although in the passage of that river Louis had not exposed himself more than necessary, seeing that the ardour of his troops was sufficient without any farther encouragement, it is but right to state that, throughout the whole affair, he by no means avoided ordinary danger, but performed the part of a good general, watching all the movements on the bank of the river, giving his orders clearly and calmly, and even pointing the cannon against the enemy himself.

Although some show of resistance was still made after the passing of the Rhine, and though Doesburg opened the sluices and Utrecht assumed an air of determination, yet consternation was spreading more and more disastrously through the United Provinces. Detachments from the army of the king carried terror into all the country round:

Arnheim surrendered, Naarden was taken, and the citizens of Amsterdam saw the French forces actually at their gates. An evident tendency had been shown, too, amongst the different provinces to separate from each other; and Louis had every reason to believe that in a very few days the whole of that wonderful country, which had been recovered from the sea with such resolution and perseverance, and which had been delivered from the thraldom of the Spanish tyrant by courage, determination, and endurance that were never perhaps displayed in an equal degree by any nation but the Dutch, would fall into his hands an easy and unresisting prey.

The passage of the Rhine was now effected; Turenne was ready to cross the Yssel farther up, and come upon the rear of the Prince of Orange; the warlike Bishop of Munster was advancing with Luxembourg towards the same point, and had already shown no slight activity and military skill; Utrecht had sent deputies to the French camp with offers of surrender; and nothing was wanting but a march of three or four days to bring three grand divisions of the French army to the very gates of Amsterdam. That city and the army of the Prince of Orange were in fact taken, as it were, in a net by the French forces; when Louis paused to besiege Doesburg, while Turenne besieged and took Skenk, Nimeguen, and several other cities.

There can be no doubt that prudence required

that these cities should be either taken or kept in check; but genius and courage sometimes go beyond prudence, and, in all probability, had Condé been in the field, or able to give the king counsel upon the spot, the royal forces would have advanced at once upon Amsterdam, and the fate of Holland would have been decided at a blow. The delay which took place saved the country. Doesburg, it is true, surrendered,* and Zutphen also was taken; but in the mean while, the Prince of Orange retired from behind Utrecht, divided his army into five small bodies, and with them prepared to defend the five principal passages, giving time for the citizens of Amsterdam and the States of Holland to adopt some decided and desperate measure to save their country at the last extremity.

We must now look to what had been taking place in the capital of the Dutch Republic. The furious parties which divided the country seemed to rage against each other with the greater violence as the French armies advanced towards the capital. One party was anxious to negotiate a peace with Louis upon any terms; the other was determined upon continuing the war, however unsuccessfully. The friends of peace, however, at length prevailed, and deputies were sent to the camp of the French King

* It held out four days, but it detained Louis six. Another cause of delay, however, was want of bread, which could not be supplied fast enough for the vast army which the king was now leading daily to a greater distance from his magazines.

to inquire what terms he was willing to grant to the Dutch people in the “existing disastrous state of their affairs.” Such were the words they used themselves; and it is evident, from that very fact, that the terms they expected were severe.

But the conditions proposed to them, and the manner in which they were treated, were such as might well drive them to despair. Louvois received them with insolent contumely; and Louis demanded nothing less than the sum of twenty millions as indemnity, every possession of the States beyond the actual limits of the seven United Provinces, Delfzyl with the twenty neighbouring villages, all the country between the Rhine and the Lech, freedom of coming and going without examination or toll, the revocation of the edicts concerning commerce, a treaty to secure the interests of the French East India Company, the discharge of a duty of fifty sous per ton upon French goods, an engagement to grant to the French commerce the same conditions that were conceded to the most favoured nations; the public exercise of the Catholic religion without restriction civil or political in all the towns of the United Provinces, the demolition of the forts of Knotzenburg and Skenk; and that an ambassador extraordinary should be annually sent to thank the King of France, and to present him with a gold medal of the weight of five or six pistoles.

These were the King's demands for himself; but

besides these, he demanded a multitude of other things for his allies,—four considerable towns with their districts for the Bishop of Munster, and a large district for the Elector of Cologne.

Had Holland conceded all this to France, there was still another power to be satisfied: England had engaged in the war, and Louis was bound to consult the interests of that country. The united French and English fleet had encountered De Ruyter and Van Ghent in the beginning of May, and an engagement had taken place which De Ruyter himself asserted to be the most fierce and bloody that he had ever witnessed: a number of vessels were destroyed on each side; Van Ghent was killed, the famous Earl of Sandwich lost, and the two fleets at length separated, each claiming the victory, and neither having obtained it.

Perceiving, however, that the fate of Holland was in the hands of Louis, Charles had determined to send ministers to the camp of that king; and on the 6th of July the Duke of Buckingham arrived, with Arlington, the secretary of state, at the headquarters of the French monarch. They were received by the King of France with the greatest distinction, and, besides continuing his own demands of the conditions we have already stated, Louis supported the claims of the King of England, who required from Holland a million sterling as indemnification for the expenses of the war, an hundred thousand pounds sterling per annum for the right

of fishery, that the Stadholderate should be made hereditary in the house of Orange,* that the vessels of the United Provinces should strike their topsails to every British ship of war, and that England should be allowed to participate equally in the commerce of the Indies.

Such were the terms proposed by France and England; and if by granting them the liberty of their country would have been inevitably lost, the States by rejecting them ran the most imminent risk of losing their country itself, for by this time the whole province of Utrecht had surrendered to Louis, and nothing, in fact, remained of Holland but Amsterdam. Those terms, however, were manifestly exorbitant, unjust, and cruel, and the citizens determined to perish rather than to accede to them.

The first effect of the bare mention of peace on such terms was to produce tumults throughout the small tract of country yet free from the presence of the French. De Witt was attacked by assassins and wounded in the streets; the Prince of Orange was elected Stadholder in an irregular manner by the populace, but the act was sanctioned and ratified by the States of Zealand and Holland,—and that general soon justified the confidence placed

The account of Pelisson leaves little doubt that Louis and Charles conjointly hinted to the Prince of Orange that if he would make a great effort to render himself sovereign of Holland, they would support him with all their power.

in him. The temptations held out to him by France and England he turned from with scorn, and in reply to the insidious representations of the English minister regarding the hopeless state of Holland, exclaimed, “ There is one means which will save me from the sight of my country’s ruin : I will die in the last ditch !”

His words and example filled the States, which had removed from the Hague to Amsterdam, with vigour and enthusiasm : a choice of two painful measures was before them, and they deliberated upon each with the calm resolution of despair. One was, to embark the population and wealth of the great commercial capital in the ships which her harbours afforded, and, plunging the country which they had rescued from the sea back again into the bosom of the ocean, to establish a new country in another hemisphere.

With this prospect, the tonnage of the shipping was accurately ascertained, and it was found that two hundred thousand families could thus be transported to India. The very idea was magnificent though terrible : but there was another measure which might precede the first. The dykes which shut out the ocean from the country round them gave the means of placing a watery barrier between them and their enemies. The sacrifice of property, the relinquishment of all that the labour of ages had accomplished, was painful to contemplate ; but it was resolved upon. The dykes were

cut in several places, the sluices were thrown open, the villages and hamlets around were inundated, the produce of a great part of that extraordinary land was swept away. But, in compensation, the ocean rushed on as a defence round those who had won an empire from her bosom, and the navy, which had maintained the glory of Holland upon every sea, sailed in and formed a floating barrier round the city that had sent it forth.

Louis could neither fight nor buy the waves of the ocean, and he now found that he had committed several great errors. Turenne and Condé had both strenuously advised him to rase the greater part of the numerous fortresses he had taken, and the latter had pointed out to him that two vast evils would ensue from keeping possession of them. In the first place, he would show all the neighbouring powers that the assertions with which he had lulled them were false, and that instead of having only in view the humiliation of an insolent people who had insulted him, he had invaded Holland for the purpose of conquest. In the second place, by putting garrisons in the multitude of large towns he had acquired, Condé had shown, he would diminish his active forces so terribly, that he would neither be able to pursue his success with vigour, nor oppose those enemies which his ambitious conduct might raise up.

Louis already felt the justice of one part of these remarks, and saw the fault he had committed in

permitting Louvois to overrule Condé and Turenne ; for he now found his forces insufficient to accomplish his purposes with that rapidity which would have carried his triumph to the greatest height. He was destined to feel it more bitterly still, however, for already the prophecy of Condé was being realised : the Emperor was waking from his trance, and, no longer doubtful of Louis's real intentions, was arming for the defence of Holland ; the Elector of Brandenburg, at this time laying the foundations of a great military power, was in the field with twenty-five thousand men to support the efforts of the Dutch ; Spain was making exertions which could scarcely have been expected of her to succour a nation who, a few years before, had come forward in her defence ; and one half of Europe was already roused to oppose the ambition of the French king.

A second great fault which Louis now perceived in his past policy, was having yielded to the flattering voice of his courtiers, the still more flattering vanity of his own bosom, and the haughty ambition of Louvois, which had all combined to make him propose to Holland terms that could only be accepted by slaves. His mild and amiable minister Pomponne, who had succeeded Lionne in the conduct of foreign affairs, had strongly counselled Louis to grant easy conditions to the Dutch, but to dismantle all the great fortresses he had taken. Had he followed this advice after the

passage of the Rhine, a far happier train of events would have followed, and changed the whole aspect of his reign. He would have displayed to all Europe a degree of moderation which would have been more glorious to him than even the success of his arms, and as serviceable to him as his diplomatic skill. Holland, bound both by fear and interest to her alliance with France, must have given his commerce the greatest advantages, and in her natural rivalry with England would have yielded the French people constant services. The Prince of Orange could never, so long as Louis supported the republican government of the Provinces, have obtained the post of Stadtholder — could never have possessed power to tear the crown from the head of James II — could never have waged a long and successful war against the King of France. Nor would the house of Austria have continued to find in the wealth of the Dutch a constant resource in its wars against Louis. Had Louis, in short, followed the advice of Pomponne, a glorious peace would have succeeded to a glorious war, and the interests of France would have been insured by a treaty which left her honour and her moderation upon the highest basis ; but Louis had again listened to Louvois and to his own pride, and committed the greatest political error of his life.

A third error which, though of an inferior kind, conducted immensely to the ultimate disappoint-

ment of the French king, was a military oversight not so much attributable to him as to one of the inferior generals.

While the royal army was advancing upon Utrecht, the Marquis de Rochefort was detached to make himself master of the towns towards Amsterdam; and it does not appear that he had any particular directions in regard to his efforts. He found the whole country so terrified, however, that scarcely any resistance was made, and town after town fell into his hands. He was a good officer, but by no means a great man, and was unable to appreciate or take advantage of great opportunities. He might have marched from one end of the land to the other without danger, so great was the alarm at the time; but he used caution when boldness was expedient, and paused to place garrisons in Wageningen, Rhenen, Amersfoort, and several other places. Narden, even within a few miles of the capital, was taken by an officer named Mazel, who had been thrown forward with two hundred men, and who wrote, that if they would send him fifty more, he might get possession of two or three other cities. Amongst those he might have captured was Muyden, which actually sent him its keys: and had Muyden, at which town were the sluices used to such great effect a few days after, been taken, the fall of Amsterdam must have followed.

Before Rochefort was ready to take advantage

of the opportunity, however, the Dutch had begun to recover from their stupor. Count Maurice of Nassau threw himself into Muyden, and put the place in such a state of defence, that a large force would have been required to reduce it; and ere that force could be brought up, the sluices were opened, the dykes cut, and Holland was saved.

Louis, then, found that he and his officers had committed several great errors, and after looking with disappointed eyes towards Amsterdam, and hoping to the last that Van Groot (or Grotius) would return with new proposals of peace,* he determined to leave the war, which now afforded little prospect of glory or satisfaction, to be carried on by his generals, and return to his capital. He lingered for some time after his resolution had been formed, in the expectation of seeing the fall of Bois-le-Duc: but while, as a preliminary, Turenne besieged and took Crevecœur; the season, which had hitherto been extremely hot and dry, changed suddenly; torrents of rain fell for five days successively, and the whole country round Bois-le-Duc was inundated.

At the same time, news of combinations forming against him in every part of Europe reached the monarch's ears, and he saw that it was high time he should be in the centre of his dominions, to direct, and examine, and encounter all. He therefore appointed Turenne governor of Gueldres and gene-

* See letter of Pelisson.

ralissimo of his armies, and setting out with all speed, reached Paris early in the month of August.

It was not perhaps too late, even at the time of his return, to follow the counsel of Pomponne, who pointed out to the king that he might yet make a treaty with the Dutch, and, binding them not to aid the Spaniards, might turn with his whole forces upon Flanders and Brabant. The aid the Spaniards had lent Holland, over and above that which they were bound to do by treaty, might, as his minister suggested, have afforded a plausible, if not just excuse for the breach of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, and Louis might have obtained, at his own door, territories which he could defend against any force that could now be brought against him.* But Louis would not abandon what he had gained; and, after having neglected to advance rapidly on Muyden with a sufficient force ere the country was inundated, after having delayed his march to take the towns on the Yssel, and after having again halted long within a short distance of Utrecht, amusing himself, La Farre declares, with negotiations for peace when two marches would have put him in possession of Amsterdam, he returned to Paris with the glory of having taken forty cities and castles, and thirty thousand prisoners, but leaving his armies in a situation of great danger, and his undertaking incomplete.

The grand fault of Louis's political life, however,

* Feuquières, tom. i. p. 37.

was the war with Holland itself. In it, he violated every principle of good policy ; and whatever was the passion to which he gave way—whether the ambitious desire of extended dominion, the arid folly of military glory, or in reality that indignant wrath at the insolent dictation of the Dutch which he assigned even to his own court* as the cause of his attack upon Holland,—still, it was to passion that he sacrificed the interests of his country.

In overwhelming Holland, Louis destroyed the party of his friends in that country, and raised up the party of his enemies ; he deprived himself for ever of the aid and co-operation of the Dutch, whose interests were in common with his own, and whose support in all rational measures he might have commanded ; and he prostrated that nation at the feet of England, with whom he himself had only a temporary and unnatural alliance, purchased by his gold, and by the dishonourable baseness of her own monarch and his ministers.

Even if it had been necessary to humble Holland in some degree, he might have done it without crushing her, and gained credit for his moderation, as well as respect for his power. But every step that he had taken in the conquest of the United

* Pelisson informs us that Louis, in speaking of the Dutch war when it was actually taking place, declared that he had meditated that act for two or three years, and that for the last six months he had never quitted the council-chamber, where any Dutch affairs had been discussed, without having some fresh cause for indignation.

Provinces had daily done something to ruin the republican party, which it was his interest to support, and to raise up into power those whom he knew to be his enemies. Thus his very first measures occasioned the post of captain-general to be bestowed upon the Prince of Orange, and gave the severest blow to the republican party that it had ever received : his rapid successes next caused the same prince to be created Stadholder, and for the time depressed the party favourable to France altogether ; and his exorbitant demands concluded all by putting a barrier against that party for ever, and working its total and utter destruction about the very same period at which he himself quitted his armies and returned to Paris.

That destruction was consummated by the death of the two brothers De Witt ; and though, in a work like this, it may be expedient to pass over as lightly as possible all collateral circumstances, yet we must pause to notice more particularly an event which terminated the influence of France over Holland.

We have seen that when William of Orange had fully obtained the first great object of his ambition, and had been appointed Stadholder of Holland and Zealand, he exerted himself with vigour and determination to deliver the country which had put its trust in him, and inspired the whole people with a resolution like his own. The popular feeling, excited to the highest pitch

in his favour, naturally turned with fury against those who had constantly opposed his elevation; and it was not to be expected of the blind multitude that they should distinguish between opposition to a dangerous precedent, and opposition to a talented individual.

The De Witts were looked upon as the personal enemies of the house of Orange; and even William himself, knowing them to be enemies to his ambition, gave the people every encouragement to follow up with acts of violence the prejudices they had conceived. On the 2nd of July he was appointed Stadtholder, and between that period and the 4th of August De Witt made various attempts to conciliate the prince, and to be permitted to act with him for the benefit of the States in general. William, however, rejected all advances, encouraged all the clamour against the De Witts; and the grand pensionary at length seeing that the retention of his office did but embarrass all parties, cleared himself of some charges of peculation brought against him, and formally resigned.

Time was given him to draw up a full and distinct account of his administration; but in the mean while a deep domestic grief afflicted him, in consequence of an accusation which was brought against his brother, the celebrated Ruard Van Putten, of a design to murder the Prince of Orange. Although the accuser of Cornelius de Witt was proved to be the basest of the base, branded with

a thousand crimes and incapable of truth, so much influence had popular feeling even over the administration of justice,—as is but too much the case in all republics,—that a virtuous, brave, and independent, but somewhat ostentatious citizen, was put to the torture, and though his innocence was clearly established, was doomed to perpetual banishment. His father, who was still living and of a great age, proceeded with his brother, no longer grand pensionary, to the prison of the Hague, in which he had been confined; and while John De Witt went in to inform Cornelius that they had come to accompany him, the father waited in his carriage without.

A rumour, however, spread amongst the people that Cornelius De Witt had been condemned, but was about to be rescued by his brother. An immense crowd assembled with threatening and tumultuous cries; the burgher guard turned out, but, actuated itself by the same passions as the people, did nothing to abate their violence. Some respect, indeed, was shown to the grey hairs of the miserable old man whose sons were destined that day to destruction; and the carriage in which he had remained was forced to drive away from the prison, while the people with shouts and imprecations surrounded the building and declared that the Ruard should never quit it alive.

The grand pensionary had remained with him all this time, and had heard the tumult without; and,

for some time, it appears, the two brothers entertained hopes that several regiments of cavalry which were then at the Hague would quell the tumult and enable them to depart in peace. The magistrates of the city also had not been inactive, and had sent to the Prince of Orange, beseeching him to come to their aid, or at least to send some military force to allay the tumult. The Prince of Orange, however, replied that his presence was necessary in the camp, and that no troops could be spared.

Under these circumstances, nothing could be done; and the tumult every moment increasing, the grand pensionary, voluntarily, according to some accounts, or forced by the mob breaking in, according to others, took his brother Cornelius by the hand and led him down towards the street. At the foot of the stairs he received a wound in the forehead from a pike; and perceiving that it was the intention of the people, whom he had served so long and so nobly, to reward all the exertions of his life with a violent death, he threw his cloak over his head, recommended his soul to God, and died with the same courage that he had lived. His brother fell also under a hundred wounds; and carrying their bodies to the gallows, the assassins hung them there together, practising upon the inanimate corpses of those two gallant and patriotic men all the outrages that blind and ignorant fury could suggest. Pieces of their flesh were cut off,

we are told, and eaten by the people; and their hearts were torn from their bodies, and exposed for several days to the public view by one of their un-punished murderers.

The republican party having lost all that gave it energy, died away, and was scarcely heard of afterwards. The last spark of that great and independent spirit which had burst forth in a bright flame during the fearful struggle between Holland and Spain exactly one century before, seemed to be crushed out by the death of the two De Witts; a new order of things was introduced, and a tendency to monarchical government may be observed, more or less, through all the proceedings of the Dutch people from that time. At all events, no such patriotic and resolute republicans have arisen since to revive or direct the energies of the old Batavian Republic.

CHAPTER VIII.

Anecdotes of Louis in the field.—Causes of the return of Louis to Paris.—Conclusion of the campaign by Turenne, Condé, Luxembourg.—Brilliant winter campaign of Turenne.—Brandenburg makes peace.—Louis threatens Flanders.—Lays siege to Maestricht.—That city taken.—Loss of Naarden.—Fate of Dupas.—Holland evacuated by the French.—Campaign of Turenne on the Rhine.—Reverses of Louis.—England detached from France.—Treaties and Alliances of 1674.—Hostilities in that year.—Franche Comté conquered.—Campaign of Condé.—Battle of Seneff.—Campaign of Turenne.—Battle of Sinsheim.—Ravages of the Palatinate.—Battle of Ensisheim.—Terror of France on Turenne's retreat.—Brilliant winter campaign.—Turenne drives the Imperialists across the Rhine.—Campaign of 1675.—The King and Condé in Flanders.—Defeat of Crecy at Consarbruck.—Campaign of Turenne against Montecuculi.—Death of Turenne—Replaced by Condé—He saves France.—Campaign of 1676.—Successes and Reverses of France.—Campaign of 1677.—Louis takes Valenciennes.—Battle of Cassel.—Successes of France.—Brilliant campaign of the King in person, 1678.—Ghent and Ipres taken.—Minor operations of the French armies.—Naval combats.—Peace of Nimeguen.

TIDINGS of the King's successes had day by day reached Paris, magnified of course by the way: for interesting events which take place at a distance, unlike objects seen afar, are anything but diminished. Besides the common augmentation of transmission, the events of the war were distorted by the peculiar tone of the French court; for there was already thrown around the King of France that sort of exaggerating atmosphere in which he moved through life. Everything about him appealed to the imagination of the French people, and breathed

of the grand, the splendid, and the magnificent. Nor was anything, indeed, more calculated to increase this delusion than his expedition into Holland, and all the events which had accompanied it, so long as they were not investigated with historical accuracy. He had taken forty towns and fortresses ; he had passed the Rhine in face of the enemy ; he had swept like a hurricane over a land which had contended not unsuccessfully with two mighty nations, and which had made a boast of dictating at Aix-la-Chapelle terms of peace to the whole of Europe. In six weeks, he had taken upwards of thirty thousand prisoners ; and standards and banners captured from the enemy had poured incessantly into Paris ever since his departure. It was known in the capital that, when a number of ensigns were pointed out to him crowding the wall of a town he was about to attack, he had replied with a triumphant smile, “ There will be so many the more in Notre Dame.”

All this was certainly very striking and very splendid ; but we must remember at the same time that the camp of the King was crowded with courtiers, who always had before their eyes the chance of the tidings which they sent to Paris being reported to him, and punished or rewarded at an after period. Thus everything became magnified even in the first report. The capture of each town which opened its gates to Louis was looked upon as a regular siege ; and when some of them sent their

keys from a distance, it was the terror of his mighty name and great exploits, not their own weakness or want of preparation, which caused them to fall prostrate at his feet. *Veni, vidi, vici*, was the motto of every gazette; each shot that was fired was a cannonade; the toll-house was magnified into a fortress; and the passage of the Rhine was supposed to have been effected after a tremendous battle.

Such was the exaggeration of the times in which Louis lived; and as nothing so soon crumbles away as the frost-work of adulation, the merits of the monarch, in an age very near his own, were diminished as much as they had before been magnified. All his personal weaknesses were sought out and exposed, and many of his high and noble qualities forgotten or concealed. All that threw honour upon or gratified the vanity of the French, the French took care to perpetuate; but they were not unwilling to sneer at Louis in any other point of view than as King of France. Voltaire himself, who while he believed himself to be a citizen of the world, was but a clever epitome of the whole French nation, took care of Louis's glory as far as it added to the glory of France, but very often stripped the man naked of the very qualities which he really possessed.

Several anecdotes, however, of Louis during the war in Holland remain well authenticated, and cast greater lustre upon him than any of his military movements in that campaign. The original clemency of his nature shone out on many occa-

sions, and still marked distinctly the difference between the despot and the tyrant. Notwithstanding the strictness of his discipline and the examples he was obliged occasionally to make, he contrived to reconcile military severity not only with substantial justice, but even with mercy itself. In first commencing his march, and especially in passing through the Spanish Netherlands, an order had been given for no man, on pain of death, to stray from his corps; and on the third or fourth day's march, two men were hung in sight of the army for disobedience of this command. It was studiously concealed, however, by Louis's order, that they had been caught in the commission of plunder and rape; and by affecting to punish the minor offence, when in reality he punished the greater, he produced the beneficial effects of stopping such crimes in the outset.

To another offence, with which Louis would have found it more difficult to deal, namely, treason, he shut his eyes, where it was not dangerous to do so. In a number of the places taken from the Dutch, considerable portions of the garrisons were found to be French: these places in general surrendered at discretion, and Louis therefore was justified by law and custom in dealing with the garrisons as he thought fit. Had he acted with any degree of severity, the slaughter would have been dreadful; but in all instances he shut his eyes, and would not even see the garrisons, lest he should be obliged to recognise his own subjects.

The indefatigable activity of Louis was also well worthy of remark, both in a general and a king. He went to bed late; he spent no time at his meals which could be avoided; he rose generally at three o'clock in the morning, and never later than five; and every moment of his time was given up to active exertion. He still occasionally exposed himself, even unnecessarily, to the fire of the enemy, and on almost all occasions watched the assaults made upon cities besieged by his forces from any elevated ground he could find within cannon-shot, leaning calmly upon an epaulement, while the balls fell around, and on more than one occasion carried death amongst his own immediate attendants.

The lavish generosity which he exercised, as we have mentioned, towards all who approached his person, was not confined, however, to one course or to one object; and his proceedings towards the inhabitants of Flanders were characterised by great justice and equity. No plunder was permitted; and although, during the marches of several days in which no forage was to be found for the horses of the cavalry, the king was obliged most unwillingly to permit the thatches of the cottages to be taken off for the sake of the straw, yet he in all instances sent for the curate or head-man of the village, saw him in person, announced to him the necessity under which he laboured of committing what might be considered an act of violence amongst the peasantry, caused him to calculate the amount of the damage done, and paid

the sum demanded, with a very considerable addition for the inconvenience to which he subjected the inhabitants.

These are good traits, and traits which must not be passed over in silence ; for while some parts of the King's conduct may act as a warning, these deeds may prove an example which it were well if other conquerors and kings would follow. It is true that it would have been better to remember, that while acting equitably towards the unoffending peasantry of another nation, he was doing injustice to his own ; but so long as the evil of war shall exist amongst men, it is well to hold up to warriors an example of moderation.

In one other respect injustice has also been done to Louis by several writers. It has generally been stated that he returned to Paris solely because the kind of warfare before him was tedious and inactive, and because he wished to enjoy the applause which his people were ready to shower upon him. That man must be dull indeed, however, who cannot see that there might be a thousand other motives of the highest and most important kind which impelled the victorious monarch to pause even in the midst of conquest, and return to his capital in order to put his own dominions in security against the storm which was ready to burst on them from all sides.

At the risk of repetition, we must pause to point out the state of the King's relations with other monarchs and states. Spain, seeing the inevitable

loss of her Flemish territories in the destruction of Holland, was labouring eagerly, in conjunction with the Dutch emissaries at different courts, to raise up enemies to Louis. Monterei, the Spanish governor of the Low Countries, is said to have declared, that if the court of Madrid would not act with vigour, and instead of giving feeble assistance to Holland, declare actual war against Louis, he would throw up the government and retire from the country. The Elector of Brandenburg, as we have already said, fearing for his own dominions, and more especially for the part of Gueldres which he possessed, was marching to the assistance of the Dutch with a body of twenty-five or thirty thousand well-disciplined troops. The Emperor, waking at length to the designs of Louis, was arming in all haste to impede his farther progress; and before the King of France reached Paris, a body of nearly twenty thousand men, under the famous Montecuculi, had assembled at Egra with orders to join the Elector of Brandenburg: and it was also evident, from the murmurs of the English people, from the increasing demands of the Bishop of Munster, and from the cold replies given to Louis by several of the minor potentates of Germany, that almost every one of the powers which had been hitherto favourable or neutral would be leagued to stop his farther progress, and make him yield all which he had already obtained. It was absolutely necessary, then, that he should be in the centre of his own dominions.

In the mean while, the King's measures for the

preservation of his conquests were prompt and vigorous; but not more so than was necessary. On the 25th of August, the Elector of Brandenburg began his march from Potsdam; on the 29th, Montecuculi set out from Egra; and on the 12th of the following month they effected their junction in the bishopric of Hildesheim.

Where the attack would be first made, of course Louis could not discover, and he had the whole course of the Rhine to defend from Strasburg to its mouth. The army with which he had taken the field had been of course greatly reduced by garrisons and casualties, and he was now obliged to divide it. Turenne, with twelve thousand men, crossed the Rhine at Wesel; Condé, recovered from his wound, marched with eighteen thousand to Metz; the Duc de Duras took the command of the army which had been commanded by the Count de Chamilli, who fell ill about that time; the Marquis de Rochefort invested Maestricht, and prepared everything for the siege of the next year; and Luxembourg, with a small corps, remained to keep in check the Prince of Orange, who had marched to besiege Worden as soon as the King and Turenne had left the field clear. The gallant defence of the Count de la Mark, who was in that place, and the approach of Luxembourg, obliged the Prince to raise the siege: but wider prospects now opened before him.

The Spaniards in the Netherlands, though they kept up the appearance, or rather the name of neu-

trality, were making every exertion to bring fresh forces into the field ; and by the time that the siege of Worden was raised, fifteen thousand men had been levied, and, under the command of the Count de Marsin, were approaching the Dutch frontier under the pretence of defending the Flemish territory against all parties.

The Prince of Orange, however, did not find it difficult to discover that the Spaniards were willing to join him at once ; and he advanced rapidly towards Tongres, in the neighbourhood of which place the army of the Duc de Duras was encamped, hoping to get that general between the Dutch and Spanish forces.

The Prince made use of every art to deceive his antagonist ; but the Duke, learning his purpose, decamped and marched towards the Meuse. As soon as this was certain, the Spanish and Dutch armies effected their junction near Liége, and pursued the French, hoping to force Duras to a battle ere he could cross the river. That general, however, threw bridges across and passed in safety ; and the Prince of Orange turned upon his steps and laid siege to Charleroi, after having feigned a design to attack Tongres.

Montal, the governor of Charleroi, had suffered himself to be deceived, and had thrown himself into Tongres ; but now, ashamed of having been the dupe of a youth of twenty-two, he resolved to effect a passage through the enemies' lines or die in the

attempt. He was successful, however; and such measures were taken by the King of France and Condé as soon showed the governor that his defence would be well supported from without. Louis, at the head of his household troops, set out from St. Germain's for the relief of Charleroi; the Prince de Condé detached a strong force of cavalry to support the King; and the siege of Charleroi was immediately raised.

The presence of the Prince of Orange, indeed, was by this time very much needed in Holland, where Luxembourg, with that genius which he afterwards displayed more fully when at the head of the whole armies of France, was busied with vast schemes for the entire subjugation of the United Provinces. The inundation formed by the cutting of the dykes and the opening of the sluices, of course, placed the Hague and Leyden in security for the time being; but towards the end of the year a very severe frost set in; and Luxembourg determined to take advantage of it in order to commence a sort of warfare previously unknown to the French. He caused an immense number of crampons to be made at Utrecht, where he had fixed his head-quarters, increased his infantry to the number of twelve thousand men by drafts from the neighbouring garrisons, and having assembled them all during the night, put himself at their head, and marched across the ice towards the Hague.

Before he reached that city, however, it was

discovered that a thaw had begun : there was no means of retreat for the French troops but along a dyke* a few yards broad at top, rendered slippery and difficult by the thaw, and defended by a fort which was in reality impregnable without the aid of cannon. Having neither food, artillery, nor any apparent means of retreat, the situation of Luxembourg seemed desperate. He marched up to the fort, however, with a determination of attacking it at any risk, when, to the surprise of the whole French army, the cowardly commander of the fort abandoned his post and suffered them to pass unopposed.

The army reached Utrecht in safety ; but this expedition is marked by an event which casts eternal disgrace upon the Duke of Luxembourg :—he gave up to the fury of his soldiery the two small towns of Bodegrave and Swammerdam, which were taken by assault, plundered and set on fire ; and the soldiery passed the night therein in every sort of cruelty, debauchery, and violence. Voltaire relates, that more than forty years afterwards he had heard the Dutch people teaching their children to read from the printed accounts of the destruction of these two towns, and inspiring into a new generation a perpetual hatred of the French people.*

* For this account, Voltaire, who is entirely supported by the Dutch historians, may, I think, be perfectly relied upon, as he had no motive for painting the Duke of Luxembourg in unfavourable colours. M. de Rocheplatte, indeed, asserts that

In the mean while, Turenne entered Westphalia ; and while he addressed a circular letter to the Electors, informing them that his design was solely to defend the conquests of the King in Holland, he advanced rapidly up the Rhine, and encamped for some time at Nassau on the Lahn. At length, however, finding himself in presence of a superior force, he retreated to the other side of the Rhine, throwing a bridge over that stream at Andernach, and laid the Elector of Treves under contribution, it having been discovered that he had been secretly treating with the Emperor.

In vain the German army attempted to pass the Rhine ; Turenne guarded the river below Mayence, and Condé burned the bridge at Strasburg before the enemy could reach it. Thus three months were consumed in fruitless efforts, and towards the close of the year the German commanders were forced to lead their troops by long and difficult marches into Westphalia. But Turenne, resolved to fatigue them still farther by a winter campaign, once more passed the Rhine at Wesel, took many important towns in Westphalia, and ravaged the Westphalian territories of the Elector of Brandenburg. In the end, the French general forced the armies of the Emperor and the Elector of Brandenburg to separate before

Luxembourg did not encourage or authorise his troops to commit the excesses they did commit ; but he assigns no authority sufficient to oppose the universal statement of the Dutch historians.

the end of March 1673, having so completely devastated the country in which they had proposed to take up their winter-quarters, that no forage was to be found. Driven to despair by the success of an enemy whom he had thought to overwhelm, but against whom he had absolutely effected nothing even with the immense army at his disposal, the Elector of Brandenburg retired to Berlin, and sent envoys to Turenne for the purpose of demanding peace of the King of France.

During the whole of the spring, the season had been so rigorous, the roads so bad, and the communications throughout the country so much interrupted, that no news had been received of Turenne for several months. All that was known of him was, that Louvois had twice written to him in the commencement of that year to retire behind the Rhine, and there take up winter-quarters ; and that Turenne had disobeyed those orders, alleging, with reason, that if he abandoned the Bishop of Munster, the Bishop of Munster would inevitably abandon France.

Louvois was furious at the contempt with which Turenne always treated him, and did not fail to prognosticate that the army under his charge would be ruined and defeated. Day by day all the flatterers of the minister, and the idle prophets of evil which always surround a court, did not fail to strengthen the voice of Louvois with their clamours ; and Louis himself, who of all monarchs

was the most careful in never uttering a word against those who were the objects of public outcry, could not refrain from exclaiming, after waiting anxiously for several weeks, " Still no news from Marshal Turenne!" The first tidings which did reach the French court were, that Turenne had foiled all the efforts of two superior armies, had taken a number of important towns in the heart of winter, had forced the Prussians and the Imperialists to separate, and had driven the Elector of Brandenburg back to his capital with severe loss.

The Germans and the disappointed amongst the French did not fail to attribute the successes of Turenne and the reverses of the Imperial army, in the first place, to the restraint exercised over Montecuculi, who was forbidden by the Imperial minister to risk a general engagement,—and, in the second place, to the illness of that great general, who subsequently was obliged to retire to Vienna. The services of Turenne, however, could not be concealed from the eyes of the King, who saw that with sixteen thousand men he had completely frustrated the efforts of a force consisting of more than forty thousand.

The envoys from Brandenburg were received favourably by Louis, who was most anxious to detach every prince from the coalition against him, and to deal with the Dutch single-handed. Louis immediately agreed to withdraw his troops from the territories of the Elector, and to restore to him all the

places he had taken, on condition of his abandoning all alliance with the Dutch, and every engagement contrary to the interests of France. This being agreed upon, the conditions were faithfully executed by the King of France ; and Turenne, withdrawing from Westphalia, while the Imperial forces retreating before him, traversed an immense extent of Germany, and encamped at Wetzlar, in the neighbourhood of Frankfort.

In the mean while, no sooner was it known that the Rhenish frontier was secure by the retreat of the armies of Brandenburg and the Empire, than Condé was ordered to put himself at the head of the troops in Holland and keep the Prince of Orange in check, while Louis himself, collecting all the forces which had been scattered round Maestricht, laid siege to that city.

Large reinforcements had been raised in France ; the whole of Louis's household troops were brought into the field ; and on the 1st of May the King commenced his march from Paris, and advanced towards Lille as if with the intention of once more attacking the Spanish Low Countries. The force he brought to act in that direction was so considerable that the Governor of Flanders became alarmed, and sent to assure Louis that the junction of the Spanish troops with those of the Prince of Orange, and the subsequent operations against France, were entirely attributable to the Count de Marsin, who had acted without orders. Louis, following the

same wise policy which he had displayed towards the Elector of Brandenburg, affected to believe the story of the Spanish government, and turned suddenly upon Maestricht.*

The trenches were opened before that city on the 10th of June. The garrison was strong and determined ; and though the Rheingrave was dead who had formerly commanded in the city, the new governor was an experienced officer who had served more than once in the former campaigns of Flanders against the armies of France. The place was well provided, and the fortifications strong ; and a long and determined resistance was anticipated.

Much courage, indeed, was shown in its defence, and a good deal of skill ; but as it is not necessary to enter into the details of all the military movements, it may only be expedient to mention the famous attack upon the half-moon, which was carried by the French. The works had been already mined, and the governor, determining at once upon his conduct, opened a tremendous fire upon the French, both from the body of the place and all the

* I derive these particulars from the memoirs of Artagnan, who was with the King both at Lille and at Maestricht, and was killed in the siege of the latter town. I suppose there is no one who will attribute the last few pages of those memoirs to any other hand than his own ; but the above facts are proved by other authorities also, though not with so much detail. The memoirs abruptly terminate with an expression of joy at being allowed to serve in the opening campaign, in which he met his death ere many days after his hand had written the last line.

neighbouring outworks, while they were attempting to secure their lodgment ; the mines were sprung at the same moment, throwing the French troops into confusion and disarray ; and the garrison rushing out with determined courage, retook the half-moon sword in hand. One of the very means, however, which they had employed to regain it, caused it to be retaken by the French.* The quantity of rubbish cast down by the mines afforded the French soldiers easy ingress again into the work ; the Dutch troops were speedily driven out and the lodgment effected. The siege did not continue so long as had been anticipated ; and thirteen days after the trenches had been opened the place capitulated to the King of France.

After the capture of Maestricht it would appear that the object of Louis was naturally to march on into Holland ; but the Dutch having followed the plan which they had so well commenced, and cut the dykes still farther, had laid the whole country under water from Bergen-op-Zoom to Bois-le-Duc. Under these circumstances, seeing that nothing was to be gained in that quarter from his own presence, Louis divided his army, and detaching twenty thousand men to increase the forces under Condé, he himself marched with the rest towards the Imperial frontier, whence, after remaining but a short time, he returned to Paris.

In the mean while, Condé, of course, had not been

* Feuquières.

able to do much in Holland; he immediately put in execution, however, as far as possible, the plan which he had before proposed: he demolished the fortifications of a number of cities and withdrew the garrisons, and only continued to occupy such posts as were of the utmost importance. At the same time he determined, if possible, to strike one vigorous blow for the final subjugation of Holland, and by seizing upon Muyden and another post in the neighbourhood of Amsterdam, to endeavour to obtain possession of the capital itself. A combined operation was arranged with the English and French fleets, which were directed to make a descent in Zealand; but the activity and skill of the Prince of Orange foiled even Condé himself in the attempt by land, while De Ruyter prevented the proposed descent from the fleets, and any farther efforts in that direction became impossible.

By this time, Maestricht had been taken, and the King had moved to the protection of Alsace and Lorraine; and on the 15th of October following, a formal declaration of war against France was made by Spain. Condé had been already recalled to watch the movements in the Spanish Netherlands, and he proceeded with all speed towards Allost, where, with an army represented as differently as it is possible to conceive, from fifteen thousand men to forty-five thousand,* he prepared to resist the

The discrepancy of the various accounts probably arises from some of the writers referring to the period previous to the

Spanish army on the one side, and the Dutch on the other.

The forces left in the mean time to Luxembourg, who now took the command in Holland, did not amount to more than five thousand men, with which of course it was impossible for that general to effect anything worthy of his reputation.

The Prince of Orange, freed from the presence of a superior force, determined immediately to resume the offensive. Feigning to be solely desirous of making himself master of Bommel and Grave, the prince caused a number of troops to be secretly assembled at Muyden and Amsterdam. Luxembourg suffered himself to be deceived, and quitting Utrecht, where he had fixed his head-quarters, hastened towards the isle of Bommel. No sooner had he departed, than the Prince of Orange, putting himself at the head of the troops he had collected, rushed upon Naarden, and invested that important city as rapidly as possible. The commander, named Dupas, though highly considered by Turenne, made but a feeble resistance ; and the place surrendered on the 14th of September, after only four days siege.†

arrival of the reinforcements from Maestricht, and others to the period subsequent.

† This was also the first considerable loss that Louis had sustained ; and that monarch—or rather perhaps Louvois, for Louis himself was in Alsace at the time—punished Dupas for the feeble resistance he had made, by ordering him to be drawn publicly into Utrecht, and his sword broken in the presence of the

This was the first great advantage gained by Holland ; but it was soon followed by many others. News daily arrived at the court of Louis which rendered the impossibility of maintaining Holland more and more apparent, and at length orders were sent to Luxembourg to evacuate the United Provinces. Before he went, however, he took every means to strengthen his own forces and increase the impediments in the way of the enemy ; and his retreat from the country he was thus forced to abandon is considered by military writers as one of the most skilful and masterly on record. He raised large contributions throughout the conquered territory, calmly dismantled all the fortresses which he could no longer keep, reunited into one corps most of the scattered garrisons which had been so imprudently left by Louis in the various captured towns, and marched back to France leaving his prisoners in Grave and Maestricht. These prisoners, however, did not form any very large part of the number taken in the course of the war. Twenty-seven thousand had been ran-

army. Other accounts affirm, that he was tried by a court martial and condemned to death ; but had his punishment commuted to perpetual imprisonment.

He had sustained one assault which lasted five hours, and it would appear that neither the works nor the garrison of Naarden were in a condition to sustain another and more general attempt to storm. The courage of Dupas was never doubted ; and though he survived his disgrace, it was only to seek and find death at the siege of Grave in the following year, where, having lost his command in the army, he served as a volunteer, openly acknowledging that his intention was to die.

somed at two crowns apiece; a small and insignificant compensation for the sums lavished in taking them, and which showed that Louis was in some haste to deliver himself from the burden of his new conquest. He had, however, already drawn vast supplies from the United Provinces, under the form of contributions; and the province of Utrecht alone had furnished the enormous sum of one million six hundred and sixty-eight thousand florins.

The calm and orderly retreat of Luxembourg showed clearly, that if by other circumstances Louis was forced to abandon Holland with precipitation, it was not any fear of the efforts of the Dutch themselves that induced him to do so. Luxembourg was undisturbed by anything but the inundation of the country; but, at the same time, the gallant Prince of Orange was not inactive. As soon as he found that the French marshal had retreated, he assembled all the Dutch and Spanish troops which he could gather together, and with an army far superior in cavalry to that of his adversary, pursued him towards the Meuse between Maestricht and Charleroi. The Count de Schomberg was ordered immediately to gather together all the bodies of horse in Hainault and Flanders, and join Luxembourg with speed.

* Not one crown apiece, as Voltaire has stated. See Mémoires du Marquis de la Fare, (who was with Luxembourg's army,) page 91. I do not find the precise time of their ransom mentioned, but La Fare implies that it was granted shortly after Louis himself quitted Holland.

The object of the Prince of Orange now was, of course, to prevent the junction of the two French generals, and to fight one before the other came up. Luxembourg, however, made a feint of passing through the Ardennes to reach Sedan and Mézières. The Prince of Orange was deceived—although it would have been difficult for Luxembourg to lead his army through that part of the country in the month of December; and the Stadholder accordingly marched towards Namur, to cut the French commander off, leaving the high road open to Schomberg, who reached Tongres unopposed. At the same time Luxembourg, by a brilliant march passed the Prince, and effected his junction with the cavalry, so as to frustrate the design of William, who was obliged to turn his efforts in another direction.

To recover the various towns which Louis had taken, by regular siege, would have been an undertaking of the greatest uncertainty and tediousness. To have secured Naarden was all that the Prince of Orange required for the security of Amsterdam; and leaving to time and the difficulty of maintaining such distant conquests, while attacked vigorously in other quarters, the task of freeing Holland from her invaders, he determined to effect his junction with the Imperial army, and by force of arms compel the minor princes who had leagued with France and harassed the Rhenish frontier of Holland to abandon Louis if not to join his enemies.

Montecuculi was now once more at the head of the Emperor's troops, and, with an army of forty thousand men, was manoeuvring skilfully in face of Turenne for the purpose of passing the Maine, and cutting off the supplies of the French army. Trusting too much to the word of the Bishop of Wurtzburg, who had promised to maintain an exact neutrality, Turenne relied solely upon that city for the supply of his army. The bishop, however, was gained by Montecuculi, who suffered him to enter the town, to take advantage of the bridge, and to attack the small escorts which Turenne had sent to convey the supplies to his camp.

The French general suddenly found himself without bread for his soldiers, or any hope of a sufficient supply nearer than Philipsburg.* Obliged at once to retreat from the strong position he had held in the neighbourhood of Wurtzburg, Turenne left the country open to the enemy. Montecuculi immediately took advantage of Turenne's movement to advance towards the Rhine, watched by the French general, who was doubtful whether it was his intention to fall upon Alsace and Lorraine, or to descend the Rhine and form his junction with the Prince of Orange. Judging, however, from the ill-provided state of the territories held by France upon the Upper Rhine, that it would be in that quarter that Montecuculi would make his greatest efforts, Turenne would seem in some degree

* Feuquières, tom. ii. p. 81.

to have suffered himself to be deceived and out-maneuvred.

Constructing bridges a little above Mayence, Montecuculi hastened to pass the Rhine, and then turned as if to enter Alsace. Turenne hurried across to cut him off from that province ; but, still entertaining some degree of doubt, he sent across five hundred of the cavalry at Oppenheim to watch the march of the Imperialists, with a view of turning with the whole army upon the Electorate of Treves in case he found himself deceived in regard to Montecuculi's intentions.

It was too late, however, by this time to attempt to interrupt the progress of the Imperial troops. Embarking his infantry upon the Rhine, Montecuculi was already on his way with the whole of his cavalry towards Coblenz. The Elector of Treves, gained or intimidated by the Imperial general, afforded a free passage to his troops by the bridges which he possessed over the Rhine and the Moselle ; and though Turenne marched with almost incredible speed to overtake him, Montecuculi had gained so much upon him that the effort was in vain.

In the mean time, the Prince of Orange had advanced towards the frontiers of Flemish Flanders ; had succeeded in joining a corps of twelve thousand Spanish troops, notwithstanding the efforts of Condé to prevent him ; and then turning towards the Rhine, had arrived in the immediate

neighbourhood of Coblenz in time to effect his junction with Montecuculi.

The united armies of Holland, Spain, and the Empire were so far superior to anything that Turenne could bring against them, that it was impossible to prevent them from executing their purpose of punishing the Electors of Cologne and Munster for adhering to the cause of France. Bonne was immediately invested by the allies; and Turenne had the pain of seeing it taken before his eyes, after a siege of nine days. The season was now far advanced; and, placing his army in winter-quarters, Turenne returned to the court, and the campaign on the side of France terminated.

Of all his conquests in the territories of the United Provinces, Louis now only retained the towns of Grave and Maestricht; but he had still greater losses to encounter by the defection of all his principal allies, some of whom openly abandoned him to go over to the enemy, while some were compelled to refrain from assisting him by fear of the consequences to their own interests.

While the military events which we have lately dwelt upon had been taking place, various naval engagements, between the fleets of Holland on the one part, and the fleets of England and France united on the other, had left the naval superiority claimed by each of the great maritime powers far more doubtful than at the end of that contest in which the fleets of Holland supported by France had

contended with England alone. In none of these actions was any very decisive advantage obtained by either party ; but the fame of De Ruyter constantly increased, while that of Prince Rupert, who opposed him, was not augmented:

During the same year, however, negotiations were begun by Holland and Spain for the purpose of detaching England from her alliance with France. The corrupt administration which had been bribed into that alliance had now fallen to pieces, and Arlington, Buckingham, and Lauderdale, three of the great leaders of the cabal, were openly charged by the House of Commons with all the many crimes and follies which they had committed. The new administration was decidedly favourable to peace ; but it was the general outcry of the whole country that induced the corrupt King of England at length to listen to the terms proposed by Holland.

The first step taken by the Republic towards a peace with England was one probably not originally directed to that object, but which was well calculated to give the English King a fair excuse for withdrawing from the war. This was an act by which the States declared the office of stadtholder, admiral, and captain-general to be hereditary in the male heirs of the Prince of Orange. Such a proceeding had before been demanded by Charles ; and though it was now granted as a recompense for the splendid services which the Prince had already rendered to the Republic, it formed

the first step in a series of negotiations carried on with England through the medium of Delfresne, the Spanish ambassador.

With him was appointed to treat the celebrated Sir William Temple, who, in conjunction with the Spanish minister, drew up all the preliminaries of the treaty which was afterwards signed on the 19th of February 1674. The prerogative of the flag was by this treaty conceded to England; the questions affecting the British and Dutch trade in the East Indies, and the points left in dispute by the marine treaty of 1668, were to be referred to commissioners acting under the arbitration of the Queen of Spain; the British settlers in Surinam were to sell their effects without disturbance or detriment, and to be brought back to England; and the States were to pay to the King of Great Britain the sum of eight hundred thousand pataeооns, amounting to about two hundred thousand pounds. An indemnity for the right of fishing on certain coasts was required by Great Britain, but still refused by Holland; but, with this exception, England obtained almost everything that she had demanded when supported by the whole power of Louis, then in the very heart of Holland.

One of the most remarkable consequences of this peace to England itself, was the disbanding of the large military force which Charles had sought upon every pretext to keep up, doubtless with views hostile to the liberties of the people. To France this

treaty was of the most vital importance, as it left the growing commerce which had sprung up under the fostering care of Colbert, and the naval force which he had called into existence, exposed to the whole maritime power of Holland. But it had a farther effect, in shaking the firmness of the other allies of France, and encouraging those who were still doubtful in their enmity to take an active part against the ambitious monarch of the French.

Louis, though making vigorous efforts to defend himself from the coalition which he saw forming against him, still professed strongly his willingness to accept any reasonable terms of pacification. Plenipotentiaries had been even named, and a congress was appointed at Cologne. But the Elector of that city was still held in the interests of France by the Bishop of Strasburg, and his brother, Prince William of Furstemberg; and in the midst of the congress, the latter was seized in the city of Cologne by agents of the Emperor, carried off into the heart of Germany and cast into prison, on pretence of his using undue influence with the Elector of Cologne, with a view to protect France and protract the war. This act, which took place on the 14th of February 1674, of course broke off all farther negotiations, and Louis addressed his efforts to defend himself vigorously against the many enemies which his aggression upon Holland had called up around him.

The effect of the arrest of Prince William of

Furstemberg, in regard to the Archbishop of Cologne, speedily became manifest. Seeing France no longer in a condition to give effectual support to petty sovereigns whose natural dependence was upon the German Empire, the Electors of Cologne and Munster, after some feeble efforts against Holland, very soon followed the example of England, and made peace with the United Provinces upon conditions advantageous to themselves. The hands of the enemies of Louis were farther strengthened by the alliance of the Landgrave of Hesse, the Elector of Treves, the Duke of Brunswick, and the Elector Palatine; all of whom, in the course of this year, 1674, entered into treaties with Holland or the Emperor, and declared themselves openly hostile to the King of France.

The Dukes of Bavaria and of Hanover were the only considerable members of the Germanic Confederation who maintained even a neutrality; and thus Louis found himself surrounded on every side by enemies, and left, without any support, to contend with Spain, Germany, and Holland. His efforts, however, and determined resolution were not unequal to the difficulties of his situation, and the campaign of 1674 commenced as brilliantly, and even with more solid advantages, than any of his former undertakings. He had at this period three armies on foot, and three celebrated generals ready to oppose his enemies in various quarters. Schomberg commanded in Roussillon; Condé was des-

patched to make head against the Prince of Orange in the Low Countries ; and Turenne set out early in the year for the banks of the Rhine to oppose the efforts of the Imperial generals.

Not contented, however, with acting merely upon the defensive, Louis determined to make himself master of that territory which, by the advice of Condé, he had formerly seized upon with so much ease, and which he had afterwards yielded, well knowing that he could regain it without difficulty when he thought fit. The plan for recovering that country was once more sketched out by Condé ; and, accompanied by the son of the prince, Louis set out early in the year for the conquest of Franche Comté.

The demonstrations made by Louis had awakened the attention of the Spanish government ; and, though still sadly neglected, the fortresses of Franche Comté were now in a better state of preparation than at the former invasion of that province. Spain, however, had no means of succouring it, except through the medium of the Empire ; and the advice of the Duke of Lorraine, who strongly urged the Emperor to pour a body of troops into Franche Comté before Louis could take possession of it, was lamentably neglected. When too late, indeed, great efforts were made to induce the Swiss to permit the passage of a body of German troops into that detached province of Spain ; but while the German and the Spanish monarchs used cogent

arguments and made magnificent promises, Colbert and Louvois employed the more effectual reasoning of gold, and the Swiss refused a passage of any troops through their territories, while Louis marched on, and aided by the important counsel of Vauban, laid siege to Besançon, which resisted only nine days. The Duke of Navailles had previously taken Gray and Vesoul ; Dole and Salins followed ; and in four months the whole of Franche Comté was once more reduced to subjection by France.

While Louis effected these conquests, or watched over them in person, Turenne had covered the King's operations by the most skilful manœuvres, in order to defend Alsace and Lorraine from the efforts of the Duke of Lorraine, who had approached his former territories in the hopes of raising the people to support him at so favourable a moment. The presence of Turenne, however, kept down all designs of insurrection ; and before the Duke of Lorraine could obtain a sufficient force from the Emperor to enable him to undertake anything of importance against the French marshal himself, the whole of Franche Comté had been subdued by Louis and his generals.

Nor during this time was the Prince de Condé idle. At the head of the army of Flanders, he had formed the project of attacking Mons. His forces, indeed, were scarcely sufficient for such an attempt, unless reinforced by some scattered garri-

sons which the Maréchal de Bellefonds had been ordered to gather together and lead to his assistance. Bellefonds, however, who ought to have been on his march to join Condé almost at the same time that Luxembourg effected his retreat from Utrecht, lingered by the way upon motives which are not very easily ascertained; so that before he could effect his junction with the prince, the Imperial army had advanced in such a position as almost to prevent its possibility.

By skilful manœuvres, however, Condé succeeded in so placing himself as to force the Imperialists to retire towards Limburg, while he himself effected his junction with Bellefonds and once more marched towards Hainault. A number of movements then took place on which it will not be necessary to pause; and the Prince of Orange, having been joined by General Souche, in command of a body of Imperial troops, which raised the numbers of the allied forces to nearly sixty thousand men, after much persuasion induced the Spanish and Imperial generals to determine upon attacking Condé himself, whose forces were inferior. His design was afterwards to fall upon Grave and Maestricht: but in the first instance, before anything could be effected against those towns, it was necessary to drive Condé from a strong position which he occupied at Piéton, in the neighbourhood of Charleroi. This position was excellent in itself, and had the advantage of

bearing upon the march of the enemy in whatever way they turned.

On nearer examination, the Prince of Orange found that, notwithstanding the inferiority of Condé's forces, it would be impossible to dislodge him from the strong position which he occupied ; and he therefore determined, in conjunction with the other generals, to undertake the siege of Tournay. He accordingly decamped from Nivelle at daybreak on the 11th of August, and directed his march by Seneff and Binche towards Quesnoy. In so doing, however, he presumed so far upon the superiority of his force as to expose his flank entirely to the great general opposed to him. He had to pass two or three small defiles, separated the one from the other by plains of no great extent, but each capable of containing a sufficient force to receive his rear-guard in case it should be attacked in passing the defiles and overcome. The Prince of Orange, however, neglected to station any troops in the first small plain; which precaution would have prevented any farther effect from an attack upon his rear-guard, than to throw it into confusion in the small plain which extended between the village of Seneff and the first defile.

Condé immediately perceived the error that had been committed, and hastened to take advantage of it. He had every opportunity of so doing uninterrupted, for some small heights which rose above the village of Seneff covered all his dispositions

from the enemy. No sooner did he perceive the army of the Prince of Orange entangled in the defiles, than he ordered the village to be attacked by the Marquis de Montal, despatched the famous General Fourille at the head of a body of cavalry to disperse six squadrons of the enemy which impeded his own operations, and then, with all that impetuosity which had distinguished his youth, charged the whole rear-guard of the enemy at the head of the household troops.

The rear-guard was routed at once; and this was all that Condé had at first proposed to attempt, for he had never conceived that the negligence or presumption of the enemy would have been so great as to take no measures for supporting the rear in case of attack. Finding that it was so, however, he pursued his advantage and brought up the rest of the troops against a large body of the enemy which had formed on the heights, and amidst the orchards of the village of St. Nicolas des Bois.

Here a new battle began. The Dutch and Spaniards were again routed, and driven before the French, till a fresh body formed to resist in the hop-grounds and village of Fay, where they were again attacked by the Prince, and the combat was carried on by the light of the moon far into the night. Absolute weariness on all sides caused the battle at length to cease, after it had lasted sixteen hours; the French still pursuing and

fighting wherever the enemy formed to oppose them,—the allies still continuing their march, and only turning to fight when compelled.

During the night, however, the allies decamped, leaving in the hands of Condé a considerable part of their baggage, their camp, and one hundred and five pairs of colours; while the long line over which the battle had extended presented the awful number of twenty-seven thousand killed, of which from seven to eight thousand were allowed to be French.

Condé at the time was suffering severely from the gout; but he was at the head of every movement, and never did he display more skill, or more of that impetuous, overpowering daring that had always distinguished him, than at the battle of Seneff, the last which he ever fought.

The Dutch sang a *Te Deum* at the Hague in honour of their defeat; and the Prince of Orange, anxious to repair it, reinforced his army by drafts from various garrisons, and hastened to lay siege to Oudenarde. Condé, however, pursued, and forced him to raise the siege; after which, the great French general, obliged to detach fifteen thousand men to swell the army of Turenne, returned to Paris, almost crippled with the sad disease which afflicted him.

Louis XIV. when he heard of his arrival at Versailles, paid him the high honour of coming to the top of the principal staircase to meet him. Condé, scarcely able to mount the steps at all, besought

the monarch to pardon him for making him wait. “Cousin,” replied the king with a smile, “when one is so loaded with laurels, it is of course difficult to walk.”

The troops detached by Condé to reinforce the army of Turenne had by this time become absolutely necessary to that great general. He had commenced the active operations of the campaign with ten thousand men, and with merely a part of that force had, as we have seen, covered the operations of the king in Franche Comté, and enabled him to make the conquest of that province uninterrupted.

The Duke of Lorraine, retiring from his unsuccessful attempt to penetrate into his dominions, hastened to join the Count of Caprara in the neighbourhood of Heidelberg, where he was waiting for the arrival of the Imperial general Bourdonville, who was also on his march from Egra with a considerable body of cavalry and infantry. The intelligence of Turenne was good, and no sooner did he hear of the plans of the Imperial generals than he determined to oppose their junction, and fight one or the other before it could be effected. For this purpose, he ordered a bridge of boats to be thrown across the Rhine at Philipsburg, and, marching with extraordinary rapidity, passed the bridge and reached that town on the 14th of June. From Philipsburg he took with him six pieces of cannon, and then with almost the whole of his cavalry

as an advanced guard, he marched on, leaving his infantry to follow, and taking his way through the Palatinate.

Not a moment was lost upon the way; and the march was so fatiguing, that the soldiers began to murmur seriously. His course was directed towards Heilbronn; and so rapid was it, that he had even exceeded his own calculation, and did not encounter the enemy till he had reached the neighbourhood of Sinsheim, a small town on the road from Heidelberg to Heilbronn. He here perceived the Imperial troops for the first time, occupying some heights on the other side of the town; while the small stream of the Elsenz-bach* ran between him and them, watering a beautiful meadow flanked by a high hill. The summit of the hill, of which the ascent is somewhat steep, forms a flat plane terminated by a thick wood, but is large enough to enable an army to form in battle.

The army of the Imperial generals, the Duke of Lorraine and the Count of Caprara, consisted of about nine thousand men, principally cavalry; and the dispositions which they made immediately on perceiving the approach of Turenne would appear to have been judicious. They threw forward a small body of troops into the town, which was walled

* This stream is generally called, in the account of Turenne's campaigns, the Elsatz. I have restored the proper name in this instance, and only wish it were possible to do so in all cases where the names of places have been corrupted by the French writers.

and fortified, but not strongly; and then taking possession of an old abbey which was very tolerably fortified, on their right, they occupied a position upon the top of the hill, in two lines, with a thick wood behind them, their left defended by a chain of steep hills, their right by the abbey and the town, and the Elsenz-bach flowing in their front. The line of Turenne's approach was thus extremely obstructed and difficult. His army, indeed, was somewhat superior in numbers, and much superior in infantry: but the Imperialists had the advantage of position, of cavalry, and of being perfectly fresh and unfatigued.

Turenne hesitated for a moment, doubting whether it would be possible to force the town, the abbey, the numerous hedges and walls that interposed, and then, advancing through a narrow and difficult field, climb the heights in the face of the enemy's cavalry, and wrest a victory from fresh troops, with soldiers exhausted by several days of fatiguing march. He nevertheless determined to make the attempt; and he consequently first attacked the town of Sinsheim, which, after a severe struggle of nearly an hour, was taken, and all those who remained within made prisoners.

The Imperial troops in the abbey, alarmed by the success of the French in Sinsheim, were struck with a panic, abandoned their post, and fled. Turenne then had to pass a narrow defile in face of the enemy, but, having dislodged the advanced parties of the

Imperialists from the vineyards and hedges in the neighbourhood, he lined the two sides of the defile with musketeers, and, thus covered, advanced towards the enemy, gradually forming his line of battle with the greatest care and caution as he gained ground. The battle was begun by an error of St. Abre, who commanded Turenne's first line, and who imprudently advanced too fast, and exposed his flank to the enemy. The Imperial generals instantly took advantage of his imprudence, and by a sharp charge broke his line and threw him into confusion. Turenne, however, arrived himself in time, caused the infantry to open a sharp fire upon the Imperial cuirassiers, and succeeded in driving them back.

Turenne took advantage of the momentary pause which ensued to bring up fresh troops, and to extend his line; and then, with his cavalry in the centre, and his infantry upon the two wings, he pushed on upon the enemy, so that all the forces on both sides were speedily engaged. The battle now became almost a hand-to-hand fight along the whole line; for the dust was so tremendously thick, that the German and the French troops were frequently mingled together, scarcely knowing who were friends and who were enemies. Turenne himself is said to have been for nearly half an hour in the midst of the Imperial cuirassiers; and after the French army had gained the heights, the conflict was so confused that small generalship could be

displayed on either part. The French, however, continually gained ground; which being perceived by the Count of Caprara and the Duke of Lorraine, they determined to effect their retreat by the woods and defiles behind them, which they effected with great skill, and drew off in good order when such a result seemed nearly impossible; but they left the field of battle in the hands of Turenne.*

The fight lasted in all four hours, and was excessively sanguinary. Almost all the officers in Turenne's army were more or less wounded; one hundred and eighty-two officers were killed; and a number of others, amongst whom were several persons of the highest rank, died shortly after of their wounds. Eleven hundred French soldiers were killed upon the spot, as well as about two thousand of the enemy; so that the losses were not very unequal. But the alarm and apprehension which their defeat occasioned amongst the Imperial troops, increased rather than diminished after the battle; and those soldiers who had retreated with so much order, fled for a number of leagues pursued only by a force of four hundred cavalry.

Having driven the enemy across the Necker, and

* I have taken the whole of this account from Ramsay, rather than from Feuquières, who treats of it much more briefly, but still gives a very different account, saying that Turenne attacked the Imperial army in flank, although the very plan which he gives of the battle seems to show the attack to have been made in front.

finding that it would be impossible to keep the field with his diminished forces against Bouronville, who was advancing rapidly to effect his junction with Caprara, Turenne retreated, crossed the Rhine at Philipsburg, and encamped at Lachen, waiting for the arrival of reinforcements from France. Those reinforcements speedily made their appearance ; and finding that his army now amounted to sixteen thousand men, he recrossed the Rhine and advanced into the Palatinate. Bouronville and Caprara retreated before him towards Frankfort : and now commenced in the Palatinate those scenes of cruelty and devastation which cast the greatest reproach upon the memory of Turenne.

Encamping in the neighbourhood of Ladenburg, Turenne, in order to punish the defection of the Elector Palatine from the cause of France, gave up the whole of his country to fire and sword. Everything was consumed ; villages and towns were burnt, the peasantry butchered without mercy ; and all the horrors of the most barbarous kind of warfare were exercised in the Palatinate, making an impression upon the minds of men which nothing ever after could efface.

So angry and indignant was the unfortunate Elector Palatine, who was nearly related to Turenne himself, that, writing him a bitter and cutting letter, and reproaching him with the barbarity of his conduct, he added that he had but one means of avenging himself upon a general who so far for-

got all the rules of civilised warfare, and that he therefore challenged him to single combat. Turenne replied with moderation, and assured the Elector that the acts of which he complained had not been committed with his orders. No doubt can rest upon the mind of any man, however, that they were committed with his connivance, and, there is every reason to believe, under the immediate directions of Louvois. That Turenne acted in this affair under distinct orders is clear from his own letter to the king, in which he assured him that “these ravages chilled the allies of France far more than excited them.”

Whilst these events were passing in the Palatinate, the Imperial army lay between Mayence and Frankfort, and in that situation received vast reinforcements from every part of the country. All the minor princes of Germany now rushed forward as if with a common spirit to oppose the aggressions of France; and the Duke of Bourronville, who commanded in chief, soon found himself in a situation to make great efforts for the purpose of leading Turenne away from the banks of the Rhine. The allies accordingly crossed that river by the bridge at Mayence shortly after Turenne himself had left the Palatinate, and encamped in the neighbourhood of Landau, on the French side of the Rhine.

Louvois, whose constant anxiety to meddle with the military manœuvres even of the greatest gene-

rals of the age had not been repressed by the joint representations of Condé and Turenne, though those representations had drawn upon him a rebuke from the king, now blamed highly the conduct of Turenne for not retreating from Alsace in order to defend Lorraine. Louis himself was persuaded that Louvois was in some degree right, and sent pressing orders to Turenne to retire from Alsace immediately.

Turenne, however, ventured to disobey, and wrote a letter to the king, informing him of his motives, and pointing out that if he retreated from Alsace before he was absolutely obliged to abandon it, Philipsburg and Brissac, which gave France in some degree the command of the Rhine, would immediately fall into the hands of the enemy. Louis was convinced, and instead of reiterating his orders, as it would seem Louvois urged him to do, he overruled the wishes of his haughty minister, and despatched such reinforcements for the purpose of enabling Turenne to execute his designs, as to put him at the head of more than twenty thousand men.

The Imperial generals had afforded some cause for believing that they entertained a design of besieging Philipsburg, and had commenced a bridge across the Rhine in the neighbourhood of Spires, for that purpose. Turenne immediately sent orders to the commandant of the fortress to watch the enemy's movements, and to fire six cannon if the Imperialists passed the Rhine—four if they marched

towards the French camp. At the same time, he detached a body of horse towards the adversary's camp; and five hundred infantry were sent to the mouth of a defile in the neighbourhood, under the command of a man whose fame afterwards rivalled and even surpassed that of Turenne himself, and who turned the tide of success completely against the arms of France. This was John Churchill, afterwards Duke of Marlborough, who had been sent by Charles II, with other officers, to the assistance of Louis in the commencement of the war, and who had remained with the French army under Turenne, notwithstanding the peace between Holland and England.

Churchill's infantry, and the body of cavalry we have mentioned, were ordered, on the firing of the six cannon from Philipsburg, to advance and attack the rear-guard of the enemy; on the firing of the four cannon, to retreat with all speed to the French camp. The manœuvres of the Imperial generals, however, were so skilful, that they concealed their march from the French, and had completed their bridge and crossed the Rhine before the governor of Philipsburg was aware. It now seemed evidently their intention to attack Philipsburg; but Turenne, who saw more deeply, would not believe that the Germans would undertake so bold an enterprise in the face of his army reinforced as it now was; and judging that their view might be to repass the Rhine again at Strasburg

in order to fall upon the higher parts of Alsace and Lorraine, he marched to prevent them with all speed.

His first step was an attempt to seize upon some of the posts between Philipsburg and Strasburg. In this, however, he was disappointed: the Germans, usually so slow, on this occasion showed the greatest activity; they obtained possession of the forts which secured the passage of the river, and while one large body which had been left in Alsace passed at Spiers, the division of the Count of Caprara effected the passage over the bridge at Strasburg, notwithstanding all that Turenne could do to prevent it. Then taking up a position along the river Ill towards Gravenstaden, the allies interposed between Turenne and France, and appeared to have rendered themselves masters of the whole of Upper Alsace, from the Rhine to the mountains of Saverne.

The district in which they had placed themselves was abundant—that in which Turenne remained, exhausted; they had the entrance of Alsace, Lorraine, and Champagne at their command, while he could not cover the French frontier without a hazardous march or an immediate battle. When the latter means was thought of, however, the great general had to remember that they had forty thousand men, while he could only bring twenty-three thousand against them. But he determined, nevertheless, to risk the chances of

an engagement at once ; and his resolution was formed on a knowledge that the Elector of Brandenburg having broken his treaty with France, was on his march to join the Imperial forces with twenty thousand men. He marched therefore to attack the army of Bourdonville at Ensheim, advancing in three columns, and on the eve of the battle, continued his progress all night.

The position of the allies was strong, as the small town of Ensheim defended their centre, and a wood with a double entrenchment protected their left. The great struggle of the day was for this wood, which was gallantly contested for many hours, but finally carried by the French, and the cannon of the entrenchments turned against the Imperialists. Towards the close of the day, Bourdonville made a feeble effort on the centre of the French line, and the Count of Caprara a gallant attack upon the flank of the left wing ; but the victory was far from gained by any party when night fell and the combat ceased. Turenne retreated immediately, finding that though he had gained some important points, he had not won a battle ; and the Imperialists decamped during the night : so that the extraordinary but not unprecedented occurrence took place, of two great armies fighting a general battle, and then retreating from each other as if both had lost it.

The slaughter was nearly equal on both sides ; and while Turenne gave his weary troops time to

repose at Osthofen and Brunswickersheim, the allies took up a position along the Ill, under the cannon of Strasburg, and there waited for the arrival of the Elector of Brandenburg, who did not join them till the 14th of October.

After giving four days' repose to the elector's troops, the Imperial generals marched towards Turenne, who retreated before them to a position which he had previously chosen near the small towns of Hochfelden and Dettweiler, where he felt that he could both maintain himself easily against even so superior an enemy, and at the same time cover the important towns of Hagenau and Saverne. The tidings, however, spread rapidly to Paris, that the Imperial army, to the number of sixty thousand men, was advancing into France, and that Turenne, with only twenty thousand, was retreating before it. The peril of the moment was certainly great, and Louis gave orders for raising the arriere ban, in order to send reinforcements to Turenne. Six thousand of this irregular kind of cavalry set out under Crequi, and joined the Viscount at Dettweiler; and a few days after, the strong reinforcement sent by Condé from Flanders, after having raised the siege of Oudenarde, approached the camp and put the French frontier out of danger.

The Imperial army now retired to its old quarters at Ensheim, and, believing that no farther effort could be made by Turenne, began to exact contributions from the country around them ; while

the Duke of Lorraine took measures to prepare the people of his own territories for a general rising in his favour as soon as he should find means of forcing his way into that district. Turenne, however, had determined to compel the Imperial troops to quit Upper Alsace; and in order to throw them still more off their guard, he affected to distribute his forces in winter-quarters. On the 29th of November, however, he caused his troops to move as quietly as possible towards Lorraine. The Imperial generals, even when they heard of his march, remained deceived as to his intentions, believing that he had only sought an opportunity of retreating undisturbed; and they consequently gave themselves up to the comfort of agreeable winter-quarters, merely blockading Brissac as a preparative to other operations in the spring.

After a short repose, however, Turenne again began his march on the 5th of December, passing his troops by separate routes along the mountains of the Vosges, and giving each detachment a rendezvous at Befort. His army thus suddenly appeared at a point where the enemy had least expected to hear of it, and, in alarm and consternation, all the remote bodies of the allied forces were called in. One, however, consisting of the troops of the Bishop of Munster, was encountered and routed by Turenne at Mulhausen; another was captured entirely in Brumstadt; and while the Imperial troops hastened in confusion to the

head-quarters of Bournonville, Turenne marched towards Durkheim, the allies being then in force at Colmar. A combat took place immediately for the advantageous pass of Durkheim ; but the French again prevailed, and, struck and confounded by the unexpected movements of Turenne, the Imperial generals decamped during the night, and made the best of their way towards the Rhine.

Turenne followed, very well pleased to see his plans completely successful ; and before the night of the 11th of January 1675, he had the pleasure of learning that the enemy had repassed the Rhine, and left Alsace free from their presence. The terror which had pervaded Paris gave way to wonder and joy at the tidings of these events ; and the courtiers, who had not failed to blame severely the movements of Turenne, now allowed that they had been *very fortunate*. Louis himself, however, did him more ample justice ; for he produced and read before the whole court a letter from the great general to Le Tellier, in which he had announced, two months before, the plan he intended to follow, and prognosticated its success.

Turenne had in that letter (dated the 30th of October) declared that it was his intention to retire before the enemy, feigning not to be able to oppose them after the junction of the Elector of Brandenburg with the troops of the Empire ; that his purpose in so doing was to give them a false confidence ; and that he would retire quite into Lor-

raine, after which the enemy would not fail to spread themselves out in Alsace. He then went on to say, that when they had thus separated their forces he would fall upon their quarters from a point whence they would never suspect he would come to surprise them; and that he would oblige them, perhaps, to recross the Rhine, and take up their winter-quarters in their own country. Such was the prophecy—for genius prophesies—of the great Marshal Turenne; and as soon as it was accomplished, and he had placed himself in a secure position near Schelestadt, he was recalled to Paris by the king, to receive the thanks of the monarch, and hear the acclamations of the people.* Those acclamations were warm and enthusiastic; the people poured out from every town and village to meet him; and the inhabitants of Champagne testified their gratitude to him who had saved their province from the horrors of war, by every honour they could show him when he passed through their country.

The only person who perhaps was really disappointed at the successes of Turenne was the Marquis of Louvois, who had not only prognosticated evil from the manœuvres of Turenne, but had done all that he could, by embarrassing his movements, and denying necessary reinforcements as

* There can be no doubt, however, that by suffering himself to be deceived in regard to the bridge and fort at Strasburg, Turenne was placed in circumstances of great danger, and a large tract of the French frontier exposed.

long as possible, to fulfil his own anticipations of defeat. Condé had also cause of complaint against Louvois; they had both remonstrated with Louis separately on various occasions, but they determined now to make a joint representation to the king of their individual grievances. Condé, however, was softened by the prayers and entreaties of Le Tellier; but Turenne persisted in his resolution, and made his complaint in form to Louis, not in the slightest degree detracting from the high merits of Louvois as a minister, but insisting that he was incompetent to direct the operations of large armies, especially from a distance. He besought the monarch, also, that if his services should be found necessary to France for the future, he might be permitted to correspond with his sovereign directly.

Louis not only granted his request, but, struck with the moderation which he displayed towards an enemy,* commanded Louvois to apologise to Turenne for the past, and to seek his friendship for the future. The minister dared not refuse to comply with the first, though he might well have evaded yielding obedience to the last part of this command.

Turenne, however, at the beginning of this year, showed the strongest inclination to retire from the world. He was now somewhat advanced in life,

* I have only met with one author, the Marquis de la Farre, who insinuates that Turenne did not act with moderation. La Farre indeed paints Turenne as acting the part of a brag-gadocio.

having entered his sixty-fourth year ; and though yet capable of great fatigue, his strength was not what it had formerly been. He was wearied equally with the pleasures and applauses of a world, and with the life of incessant activity which he had led from boyhood ; and he was anxious to throw off all farther cares, and pass the rest of his days amongst the good fathers of the Oratory, to whom he had become greatly attached since his conversion to the Roman Catholic faith. He saw, therefore, with the greatest pleasure, a strong inclination upon the part of the allies to make peace upon reasonable terms ; but there was one point upon which Louis insisted as a preliminary, but to which the Emperor would not consent. This was the immediate liberation of William of Furstemberg, who had been seized, as before mentioned, at Cologne. The Emperor positively and distinctly refused to liberate him, and preparations were immediately made for carrying on the war with vigour, although plenipotentiaries had been appointed to meet at Nimeguen in order to treat for peace.

The efforts of the King of France were great and magnificent : he himself, in company with Condé, took the field in Flanders, at the head of an army of sixty thousand men, and made rapid progress against the Prince of Orange. The Army of Flanders, however, was divided into several corps ; and while Crequi marched towards, and attacked and took Dinant, and Rochefort made himself master

of Huy, the Prince de Condé invested Limburg, and the King himself covered the operations of the siege at the head of an army of observation.

William of Orange instantly advanced with rapid marches in order to raise the siege of Limburg; and the King of France, crossing the Meuse, advanced to meet him; while Condé, leaving his son to continue the siege of Limburg, hastened on with a considerable reinforcement to support the King. The Prince of Orange, however, finding himself not strong enough to oppose the powerful army now before him, retired as the King approached, and having been seized with the small-pox, was incapable of effecting much against the armies of France during the rest of the campaign. Limburg therefore fell on the 22nd of June; and the Prince de Condé followed up this success by the capture of Tirlemont, St. Tron, and several other places. He was obliged, however, to detach large reinforcements to swell the army of Turenne; and the King, after a brief appearance at the head of his troops, returned to Paris, leaving Condé sufficient forces to maintain himself against the enemy, but not to effect any great conquest on the part of France.

The corps under Crequi was less successful than any other. Treves, which had been taken by the French about the same time that Bonne had been captured by the allies, was now menaced by the Prince of Lunenberg; and Crequi, determined to

save that city, encamped imprudently on the banks of the Sarre in the face of a superior enemy, and was completely defeated by William of Brunswick and some other of the allied generals.

The mere defeat was but a minor part of Crequi's disgrace, as the disaster was entirely attributable to his own errors. The action took place at Consarbruck; and the French general having thus rashly encamped on the banks of a river the fords of which he did not know, in presence of an army nearly double in number his own, neglected also to take sufficient precautions for securing the bridge and the tower which defended it. His cavalry abandoned him in the midst of the action, and his whole forces were, as we have said, completely routed.

In despair at what had occurred, Crequi threw himself into Treves, determined to defend it to the last: but here again he was unfortunate. One of the officers, of the name of Boisjourdan, who, besides having been condemned to death for murder upon a former occasion, and only having been pardoned at the intercession of the Bishop of Munster, had a hereditary right to treachery, his ancestors having distinguished themselves before him by betraying the posts committed to their care, signed a capitulation with the enemy without his superior officer's knowledge or consent; and Crequi, throwing himself into a church with a few gallant friends, chose

rather to surrender at discretion, after the place was in the hands of the enemy, than to take part in a capitulation which he considered disgraceful.

When the misfortunes of that officer were told to Condé, instead of pointing out the faults he had committed, which were conspicuous, or dwelling upon his rashness, which was well known, the great prince replied, “ There wanted nothing but such a defeat to make Crecy one of the greatest generals of the age.”

Before that defeat occurred, however, an event had taken place which rendered it absolutely necessary that all the skill of the French commanders should be exerted to supply a loss of the greatest importance to France.

If Louis had made vast exertions to oppose his enemies, the allies had also made vast exertions to overwhelm him. The Duke of Brandenburg, finding himself attacked by the King of Sweden, had been forced to leave the army of the Emperor, in order to oppose that prince, who had now thrown off the character of mediator, and openly espoused the part of France. But the loss of his support was more than compensated by the presence of Montecuculi at the head of the Imperial troops; for never, perhaps, was there a general so well fitted to cope with Turenne as he who now took the field against him. Calm, skilful, thoughtful, determined, like Turenne himself, he was a consummate master in the art of war, and now found himself at the

head of the very best troops of the Empire, without any one to direct his operations or to oppose his schemes against the French general.

Montecuculi commenced the campaign early, and began his march upon Strasburg, hoping that the inhabitants would permit him to pass the bridge of that city. Turenne set off from Paris on the 11th of May, hastening also to Strasburg, in order to prevent the Strasburghers from permitting the passage of the enemy; and a campaign commenced, supposed to be unequalled in skilful manœuvres on both parts.

The design of Montecuculi was to enter Upper Alsace; to effect which he caused a part of his troops to pass the Rhine at Spires, and by skilful manœuvres endeavoured to withdraw Turenne from the neighbourhood of Strasburg. Turenne, however, clearly penetrating his motives, instead of marching either directly towards him, or attempting to cover Haguenau, at once crossed the Rhine, and took up a position at Willstett, which enabled him to counteract any efforts of Montecuculi in Alsace, and at the same time laid open to him the whole heart of Germany. Judging Montecuculi rightly, he felt sure that general would immediately attempt to drive him once more across the river, which only could be done by fighting him or by cutting off his provisions; and for the latter purpose the Imperial commander laboured with the utmost skill.

Finding that it was impossible to attack Turenne

with success in his camp, and difficult to starve him out of it, Montecuculi applied himself by every sort of feint and artifice to induce him to abandon it himself. He marched ; he counter-marched ; and he menaced Turenne's bridges over the Rhine : but still Turenne, though he occasionally followed him for the purpose of attacking him in case a favourable opportunity presented itself, was never drawn to such a distance from his camp as to neglect the defence either of the bridge he had himself constructed at Ottenheim, or the bridge of Strasburg, the possession of which was another great object of all Montecuculi's manœuvres.

Finding, however, that the space he had to defend wearied his troops by continual movement, Turenne removed his bridge from Ottenheim to Altenheim ; and Montecuculi then giving up the hope of winning either of the two bridges we have mentioned, decamped from behind Offenburg, and, pursued by Turenne, endeavoured to lead that general into a difficult country where forage and provisions were scarce. That the same difficulties into which he tried to lead the French, might not affect his own army, he attempted to procure supplies by a bridge which he had caused to be constructed at Strasburg, but which Turenne took means to prevent from descending the Rhine.

In the mean time, the French soldiers had suffered tremendously from a rainy season in a low soft

soil; and no sooner did more favourable weather present itself, than Turenne determined, if possible, to force the Imperial general to a battle.

In various movements for these purposes on both parts, the time passed till the 24th of July, when the Marquis de Vaubrun, in advancing with the view of pressing Montecuculi, was surprised, defeated, and would have been completely lost with his division, had not Turenne arrived suddenly to his assistance.

The appearance of a superior French force caused the Prince of Lorraine, whose division had surprised Vaubrun, to retire. He was pursued by Turenne; and the French general took up his position in a meadow, with a rivulet and a village on his right, a wood in front which he garnished with infantry, and some difficult ground upon the left. In this post he had several advantages over the Imperial army, whose position was more narrowed; and finding that on the night between the 25th and 26th of July the enemy were retiring, he advanced hastily upon them on the following morning, and came up with the Imperialists at Sasbach, just as Montecuculi and Caprara, having reunited their forces, were taking up an advantageous position on the edge of the hills, with some profound ravines and a rivulet between them and the French army. The church of Sasbach, on the right of the Imperial troops, had been garnished with infantry; and Caprara in coming up had taken advantage of

the broken nature of the country, using every hedge and every ravine as a point of defence in which to place his musketeers.

Turenne, as soon as he saw the position of the enemy's forces, determined to attack them, and went out to reconnoitre. Their right, he perceived, was nearly impregnable ; but on the left fewer precautions had been taken, and having resolved to make his attack upon that side, he gave the necessary orders for bringing up and forming his troops according to the plan he had laid out in his own mind. A good deal of agitation was visible in the Imperial forces, though it still seemed as if they intended to give battle in the strong position they had taken up, and a desultory cannonade was kept up on both sides.

Turenne had heard mass and taken the communion ; and he then lay down under a tree to breakfast, expressing much confidence in the success of the approaching battle, which was very unusual with him. After he had been in that spot some time, information was brought to him that a movement as if for the purpose of retreat had been observed in the enemy's line, and mounting his horse, he rode forward to ascertain what was the real cause thereof. As he rode on, he ordered all his staff to remain behind, and shortly after met an English officer, who said to him, " Come this way ; they are firing in that direction." " I do not intend to be killed to-day," replied Turenne with

a smile, and rode on. A few steps farther he found St. Hilaire, who commanded the artillery, and who had been busily engaged in making dispositions for the approaching battle. As soon as he saw Turenne, he exclaimed, “Look at that battery which I have placed there!” The marshal drew in his horse; and at that moment a cannon-ball carried off the arm of St. Hilaire with which he was pointing to the battery, and struck Turenne himself in the very middle of the body. His head fell forward instantly; and the horse, finding no pressure on the rein, turned round and galloped back to the spot where the staff had remained. There it stopped; and Turenne, who had kept his seat till that moment, fell into the arms of those who surrounded him. He twice opened his eyes, but he never spoke more; and, in an instant after, the last spark of life departed.

A cloak was immediately thrown over the body to conceal the event from the soldiery; but the agitation amongst the principal officers who surrounded the corpse, and the sight of the well-known horse of the marshal, called La Pie, without a rider, soon spread the tidings. Numbers then rushed forward to see the body of a general whom all had loved with enthusiasm; but the sight inspired them with fury rather than depression, and they demanded vehemently to be led forward to avenge the death of “their Father,” as they commonly called that great man.

Seeing the state of stupefaction into which his death had thrown the generals, the soldiers shouted loudly, “ Let go La Pie,—she will lead us to the enemy !” but Vaubrun and De Lorges, who now took the command, determined to retreat, and made the best of their way to cross the Rhine. The enemy pursued in haste, and came up with the French army at a moment when Vaubrun and a part of the forces had passed the river, while De Lorges with the rest still remained upon the German side. The Imperial troops instantly commenced the attack, and a sanguinary combat ensued, in which a great number of men were killed. In the end, however, the French effected their passage across the Rhine, and reached Schelestadt, though not without a loss of between three and four thousand men.

As a man whose name will be immortal, we must pause for a moment longer upon some particulars respecting the great general whose death we have just recorded ; and, without attempting to give a detailed account of the character of one whose life and actions we have so long dwelt upon, we will add the striking and energetic picture of him afforded by a celebrated contemporary who was personally well acquainted with him, and who speaks with that air of candour and sincerity which carries conviction with it.

“ Henry de la Tour, Viscount Turenne,” says the Count de Bussy Rabutin, “ was of a middling

height, and with large shoulders, which he raised from time to time in speaking:—these are the sort of bad habits which one acquires generally from the want of assurance. He had large contracted eyebrows, which gave him an unhappy look.

He had so much experience in war, that with a good judgment, which he had, and extraordinary application to the trade, he had rendered himself the greatest captain of his age. To hear him speak in a council, he seemed the most irresolute of men; but, nevertheless, when he was obliged to choose his part, no one ever chose it better or more rapidly. His true talent, which is in my opinion the most to be esteemed in war, was that of regaining the advantage when matters were in a bad state. When, in the presence of enemies he found himself the weaker, there was no position out of which, by a rivulet, by a ravine, by a wood, or by an eminence, he did not find means of drawing some advantage. Up to the eight last years of his life he had been more circumspect than enterprising; but seeing that temerity was the fashion, he became less careful than he had been, and as he chose his measures better than others, he gained as many battles as he fought. His prudence proceeded from his temperament, and his boldness from his experience.

“ He had a very great extent of mind, capable of governing a state as well as an army. He was by no means ignorant in literary matters, and knew

something of the Latin poets, and a thousand beautiful passages in the French poets. He was fond enough of *bons mots*, and was an adept therein. He was simple in his dress, and even in his expressions. One of his greatest qualities was his contempt for riches : never was there a man who cared so little about money as he did. He had commanded the army of France in Germany, where he might have amassed millions, and he had not done it. This disinterestedness, together with the high alliances which he had in that country, gave him much credit with the Germans.

He loved women, but without attaching himself to them. He was fond of the pleasure of the table, but without excess. He was a pleasant companion : he knew a thousand tales, took a pleasure in telling them, and told them very well. During the last years of his life he was courteous and benevolent ; he gained the love and esteem both of officers and soldiers ; and in point of glory he found himself at length so much above all the world, that that of others could no more incommod him."

All parties mourned Turenne ; Montecuculi himself expressed the deepest sorrow, exclaiming, "There died a man who did honour to man !" and a general grief and consternation spread through France. The King ordered the body of his great general to be buried at St. Denis, in the chapel of the kings ; and as eight marshals of France were created about the same time,—though the creation

had been long contemplated,—it was thought to be performed for the purpose of supplying the place of the dead general, and a witty woman of the court observed, that these eight marshals were “change for a Turenne.”*

None of these officers, however, were considered equal to the emergency of the moment, nor expected to remedy the loss of Turenne. The Count de Lorges had succeeded in effecting his retreat with considerable skill; but the contrast between him and Turenne was so great that Montecuculi did not fail to act boldly upon the offensive; and passing the Rhine by the bridge of Strasburg, which was again opened to the Imperial army by the inhabitants of that city, he advanced to attack Haguennau and Saverne. Louis justly believed that nobody but Condé could repair the loss of Condé's great rival; and he was immediately recalled from the army of Flanders, where Luxembourg was left in command. Condé then, by the direction of the king, hastened with some small reinforcements to put himself at the head of Turenne's army; and at

* Turenne was killed on the 27th of July; the eight marshals of France were created on the 30th of that month, at a period when the death of Turenne could scarcely be known in Paris: so that, in fact, the elevation of these generals to that rank could have no reference to the loss which France had sustained. Neither were these officers by any means unworthy of the honour conferred upon them, as will be seen when it is stated that amongst them were D'Estrades, Schomberg, La Feuillade, and Luxembourg.

Metz he heard, for the first time, of the defeat of Crequi at Consarbruck, and of the capture of Treves : so that Alsace and Lorraine appeared both to be opened to the enemy, and his own army between two hostile and superior forces.

The Duke of Duras, indeed, had chosen a strong position at Chatenoi ; but the capture of Haguenau and Saverne, had they fallen, would have put him in so dangerous a situation, that he could not have maintained himself against the two strong armies which menaced him on either side. Condé immediately did all that he could to strengthen the position at Chatenoi, and then marched on towards Montecuculi, saying, that all he could desire, to enable him to succeed in the campaign, was half an hour's conversation with the shade of Turenne. It would seem, indeed, that he had obtained that half hour's conversation which he desired; for, at once laying aside the impetuous genius of his own character, he assumed the calm, deliberate, persevering spirit which characterized the tactics of Turenne; and by this means he forced Montecuculi to raise the siege of Haguenau and of Saverne, and to repass the Rhine. The Imperial commander, indeed, did not retire till after he had watched the French general for nearly two months, and had tried to starve him out of a camp which was supplied with difficulty, but which the genius of Condé continued to maintain in spite of all the efforts of his great adversary.

The campaign thus ended late in the year ; and its conclusion was distinguished by the retreat of the two greatest generals of the age from the busy stage on which they had played so conspicuous a part. Condé, worn out with fatigue, and a martyr to a painful disease, besought the King to permit him to quit the command of the armies which he had so often led to victory, and retired to Chantilly, to pass the remainder of his days in tranquillity. Montecuculi, who had long been in a very feeble state of health, also quitted his command at the end of the campaign ; and a new era may be said to have opened in the military history of Europe.

Nevertheless, although deprived of those officers whose long experience and constant success gave the best possible guarantee for future victory, Louis XIV. did not pursue the war with any disadvantage, but, on the contrary, seemed to exert even a degree of energy more successful from the difficulties which now surrounded him. Early in the following year he began the campaign in person, and entering into Flanders, accompanied by his brother and by four marshals of France, he began a rapid series of conquests, taking the town of Condé on the 26th of April, and Bouchain in the month of May following; while Aire was besieged and captured on the 31st of July, and a number of inferior advantages were gained in different parts of the Low Countries.

The Prince of Orange, however, had not been idle. He advanced at one time with a considerable army to raise the siege of Bouchain, which was carried on by the Duke of Orleans, while the King covered the operations of the besieging army. He then made various efforts to draw Louis from his position; and his movements were so complicated, that to the present day his intentions remain unascertained.* In the first instance he marched towards Mons, as if with the purpose of attacking that town; and Louis, doubting the reality of these demonstrations, proposed to make a reconnaissance in force at the head of his army. This design, however, was interrupted by news received on the 8th of May that the Prince had decamped from before Mons, and turned towards Condé. It was now supposed that the enemy either intended to attack Courtray, or to pass by Valenciennes to the relief of Bouchain; and the King immediately marched to prevent such a result.

The greatest skill was displayed by the Prince of Orange in concealing his movements; and it was not till a late period that Louis ascertained that the enemy were in full march towards Valenciennes. Tidings to that effect arrived during the

* La Farre imagines that he intended to besiege Mons, hoping to capture that city before Louis could arrive to relieve it. Others have supposed, and indeed it was generally believed in the camp of Louis himself, that his intention was to draw the King to a distance from Bouchain, and by a sudden march fall upon the army of the Duke of Orleans.

night; and the French monarch mounted before daybreak, and advanced rapidly towards that city at the head of his household troops, leaving the rest of the army to follow as fast as possible.

When he arrived in the neighbourhood of Valenciennes, shortly after dawn, he found a body of cavalry assembling under the counterscarp, so few in number, that at first he believed it to consist of nothing but the cavalry of the garrison. Other regiments, however, began to appear; and very soon a true wing of cavalry formed itself in battle array before him.

The King at once proposed to the officers who accompanied him to attack the enemy as they came up, although he had with him at the time but twelve squadrons of horse, the rest of his army having been left far behind. The several marshals, however, who surrounded him, all opposed his purpose, representing to him the danger of such an attempt, totally unsupported as he was at that moment.

In the mean while, the forces of the enemy increased every moment; the second line appeared; and Louis still declared his wish, as some more bodies of horse joined him also, to attack the allies ere they had taken up their position. He was still opposed, however; and while he waited for his own army, the whole force of the Prince of Orange, amounting to fifty thousand men, formed in a narrow and difficult field under the counterscarp,

with the left resting on Valenciennes, and a wood upon the right.

The French troops arrived more slowly; but in the end Louis found himself at the head of an equal number of men, with a more advantageous position than his enemies in some respects, though they occupied the higher ground, and had the support of the cannon of Valenciennes. In this situation Louis seemed to consider that his honour was engaged to attack them; but he was overruled by his council of war, and especially opposed by Louvois: so that both armies entrenched themselves in each other's presence, and, after Bouchain had fallen, separated without striking a stroke.*

Louis effected his retreat with great skill; but he never ceased to regret that he had not fought the Prince of Orange under the walls of Valenciennes. A number of movements followed on the part of each of the two armies, in the course of which it seemed that the object of the Prince of Orange was to withdraw the King from any great attempts, and yet so to occupy his forces as to prevent him from detaching any considerable body of men to support Marshal Luxembourg on the banks of the Rhine. That commander was there opposed by the young Duke of Lorraine, whose father was

* See La Farre, Pelisson, Relation de la Feuillade, &c. All these accounts prove that the wish and purpose of Louis himself was to attack the enemy, and that he was alone overruled by the opinion of all his generals.

lately dead, and who, at the head of a daily-increasing army, was displaying great skill and vigour in opposition to one of the greatest generals of the age.

At length, however, Louis received intelligence that—in consequence of the possession of Lauterburg, which had been suffered to fall into the hands of the enemy by the feeble general who assumed for a short time the command of the French army after Condé had retired—the young Duke had been enabled to lay siege to Philipsburg; and although Louis affected from the first to look upon the attempt against that place with no great anxiety, it became absolutely necessary to strengthen the army of the Duke of Luxembourg.

Having, therefore, sent off a large detachment to join that general on the Rhine, the King returned to Versailles, leaving his armies to the command of the generals who had been serving under him.

The uncertainty which the Prince of Orange had displayed while the French monarch was himself in the field, might, perhaps, proceed from the difference of opinion which existed between him and the Duke of Villa Hermosa, then Spanish Governor of the Netherlands. The Dutch eagerly called upon him to do something for the advantage of Holland, and the Spaniards required him to defend Belgium; but his conduct was ultimately determined by other circumstances. It would seem that the incursions of Calvo, the Governor of

Maestricht, who pushed his desolating expeditions into the heart of the United Provinces, made William resolve to lay siege to that town ; and, deceiving the French generals, he appeared before it in the beginning of July.

Calvo, one of the bravest officers in the service of France, though by birth a Catalonian, commanded in Maestricht, and evinced a determination from the first to defend the place to extremity. He was more accustomed to operations in the field than behind the walls of a fortress, and, it is recorded, that when the engineers endeavoured to explain to him the progress made by the Prince of Orange, he replied, “ Gentlemen, I understand nothing of the defence of a fortress,— all I know is that I won’t surrender.” Nor did he, till at length, after taking Aire, Marshal Humières detached such large reinforcements to the army of the Count de Schomberg, who was watching anxiously all the proceedings of the Stadholder, as to enable him to march boldly to the relief of Maestricht.

The prince was in consequence forced to raise the siege, his army being so diminished by sickness and slaughter that it would have been madness to wait for Schomberg under the fire of a hostile garrison. In making his retreat, he embarked his wounded, with thirty pieces of cannon and an immense quantity of ammunition, upon the Meuse ; but the boats which carried them were captured by

the French. He afterwards, by a skilful counter-march, got in the rear of Schomberg, and attempted to defend the defiles of the Cinq Etoiles against him in his retreat towards Charleroi; but that general marched on boldly, and, executing a most difficult movement, passed the Meheigne in his presence.

The arms of France were less successful on the side of Germany, where, in spite of all that the Duke of Luxembourg could do to prevent it, Phillipsburg was taken after a gallant defence of seventy days. The Duke of Lorraine then attempted to penetrate with an army of sixty thousand men into his hereditary dominions; but Luxembourg, though inferior in force, found means to prevent his passing the Rhine; and the capture of Montbeliard on the one side, executed by a detachment from Luxembourg's army, and of Bouillon on the other, by Crequi, who had some time before been delivered from imprisonment, ended the campaign advantageously for France on that side also.

The war was pursued in the year 1677 by Louis taking the field at a very early period, and by the most unexpected success on the part of France. The army of the King was in the field before the end of February. The King himself set out from St. Germain on the 28th of that month; and the strong city of Valenciennes was invested and besieged in form by the 9th of March.

The Dutch and the Spaniards were perfectly un-

prepared for this rapid and energetical method of continuing the war; and though all haste was made to gather together an army in order to interrupt the progress of the French monarch, there was no hope of accomplishing that object unless Valenciennes made a vigorous and long-protracted resistance. Strange to say, however, that place was captured on the 17th of the month, by an accidental act of daring on the part of the Royal musketeers.

The trenches had been opened some time, but none of the outworks of the place had been taken; and it was necessary to become master of several very important works before any impression could be made upon the body of the place. At length it was determined to storm one of the half-moons; and Vauban, under whose direction the siege was conducted, proposed that the attack should be made in the open day instead of at night, which had always been the case up to that period. All the other general officers who were present opposed this suggestion as a hazardous innovation; but the reasons of Vauban proved convincing with the king, and the attack was ordered to take place at nine on the morning of the 17th of March.

Two companies of musketeers led the assault, followed by two other battalions. The sole object proposed, we must remember, was to effect a lodgment on the half-moon. After a momentary struggle with an enemy that never expected to be

attacked at that hour of the day, the musketeers drove all before them. A drawbridge, which communicated with inner works, was let down to afford a retreat to the fugitives; the musketeers pursued so fast as to make themselves masters of it; the panic spread through the Spanish soldiery in the other works; the French guards followed the musketeers, crowding onward; the two branches of the river, which served as moats to the town, were passed in a moment, and, driving the Spaniards from entrenchment to entrenchment, the storming-party was in the heart of the town before either Louis himself or the Governor of Valenciennes was aware that an attack had been made.

The number, however, was so few, that they might have been destroyed in detail, but for the extraordinary coolness and determination which they displayed. A young officer of the name of Moissac drew his little force up in array behind a barricade formed of carts; the houses on either side were garnished with musketeers; and the citizens, seeing that a party of the enemy had forced their way into the town, and established themselves in such a position that the whole French army could pour in to their support before they could be dislodged, proposed at once to capitulate. Thus while Louis himself, hearing with astonishment that Valenciennes had been taken by storm, galloped with all speed towards the town in order to save it from pillage, a regular negotiation was

going on, which ended in the garrison's surrendering as prisoners of war, and the town remaining in the hands of Louis XIV.

From Valenciennes, that monarch turned upon Cambray, and laid siege to that city towards the end of March. At the same time, he despatched his brother to attack St. Omer, with the Maréchal D'Humières under his command.

By this time, however, the Prince of Orange had assembled a sufficient force at Ypres to attempt something in defence of the country; and, unable to march as far as Cambray with any chance of success, he advanced towards St. Omer, in order to give battle to the Duke of Orleans, and force him to raise the siege of that place.

No sooner did the King hear of his march, than he detached the Duke of Luxembourg with a strong reinforcement to support his brother; the city of Cambray having by this time surrendered,* and nothing remaining to be captured but the citadel. As soon as the Duke of Luxembourg had joined the army before St. Omer, it was determined that the Duke of Orleans should withdraw all the troops that could possibly be spared from the siege of that place, and march to meet the Prince of Orange.

The two armies encountered each other near Cassel;† and the Prince of Orange is said to have committed a great fault in having suffered it to be a defensive rather than an offensive battle on his

* On the 5th of April.

† The 11th of April.

part, when his object was to relieve a besieged city. He took up a position on the bank of a rivulet bordered with hedges ; and an error committed by Humières, in pushing on somewhat too ardently across a bridge before the rest of the army was prepared to pass the stream, gave William for a moment the advantage. Luxembourg and the Duke of Orleans, however, soon came up in line with Humières, and forced the passage at every point, after which the Dutch gave way and fled, suffering a complete and signal defeat.

St. Omer surrendered on the 20th of April, nine days after the battle. The King, it was remarked, spoke very little of his brother's victory, and did not ask to see the field of battle when he proceeded to St. Omer : nor did the critics of Louis's conduct fail to observe that he returned to Versailles almost immediately afterwards, as if mortified at the event, and that the Duke of Orleans never after commanded one of his brother's armies. There can be no doubt that there are occasions on which a man may be too successful for his own good fortune.

As soon as the Prince of Orange was capable of resuming any active measures, he again advanced and laid siege to Charleroi, but was forced to raise the siege of that place upon the approach of Marshal Luxembourg ; and the rest of the campaign was feeble and inactive in that part of the country.

On the Meuse, however, and on the Rhine, though very small armies were employed on the part of

France, yet the success of the generals who commanded clearly showed that the military glory of France was not destined to be extinguished by the death of Turenne and the retirement of Condé. The Duke of Lorraine, at the head of a large army, had skilfully formed the plan of an offensive campaign against France, proposing to enter Lorraine from the side of Treves and Luxembourg, while the possession of Philipsburg and Lauterburg afforded him the means of acting when he pleased against Alsace. He therefore assembled his principal force at Treves with the intention of commencing his operations on the Saare, but directed the Duke of Saxe Eisenach to cross the Rhine at Strasburg with another considerable corps, in order to force his way into Alsace.

The defeat of Crequi at Consarbruck had produced the effect which Condé anticipated, and had changed his rashness into cool and cautious energy. He remained in person in the neighbourhood of Thionville, for the purpose of opposing the Duke of Lorraine; while the gallant Baron de Montclar, with a detached corps, opposed the Duke of Saxe in Alsace.

Crequi now displayed all the generalship of Turenne: he straitened the Duke of Lorraine in his camp, he cut off his supplies, he harassed his forces, he encamped continually close to him, he impeded him in all his undertakings, he frustrated all his designs, and yet he never suffered him even to en-

ertain a hope of forcing the inferior army of France to a battle.

The Duke of Lorraine advanced as far as Metz, but, disappointed in that quarter, was obliged to leave the Saare and the Moselle, and turn upon the Meuse. Crequi, however, was still close to him, marching side by side with him to Mouson, and continually cutting off his supplies, so that in the end the Duke was obliged to give up his purpose, and to proceed towards Alsace, hoping to effect something in that quarter. The constant proximity of Crequi, who followed him still, obliged that prince, in the end, to lead his troops back through the Palatinate; and the French general, at once divining his purpose, hastened by the shorter road open before him into Alsace, and gained several marches upon the enemy.

In the mean time, Monclar had acted upon the same principle towards the Duke of Saxe, and had forced him to repass the Rhine. That prince fancied, however, that he could maintain himself upon the Kinzig, close to Kehl, till such time as he was rejoined by the Duke of Lorraine; but Crequi, having gained so much upon the latter, was enabled to cross the Rhine himself, with a large part of his army; and, marching upon the Kinzig with extraordinary rapidity, he forced the Duke of Saxe Eisenach to throw himself into a small island in the midst of the Rhine.

The Regency of Strasburg had constantly shown

a preference for the enemies of France ; but, in the present instance, the threats of Crequi and the fear of seeing their city besieged by the French induced them to refuse faintly to suffer the Saxon prince to pass the bridge of that city, and famine stared him in the face, when, by a negotiation with Crequi, he obtained a regular passport for himself and his army, by which he was permitted to return into the heart of Germany by a given road.* Crequi, perhaps, might have drawn greater advantages from the situation to which he had reduced the Duke of Saxe Eisenbach ; but the Duke of Lorraine was rapidly approaching, the Regency of Strasburg were well disposed to give the enemy a passage if they saw their city protected by a superior army, and the junction of the two divisions of the Imperial army was thus greatly to be feared. Under these circumstances, Crequi granted mild terms, and delivered himself from the presence of one powerful body, while he hastened to oppose the other.

He was still successful : in ten days after he had thus overcome the Duke of Saxe Eisenach, he attacked and defeated a part of the Imperial army at Kochersberg, near Strasburg,† and continued to straiten and harass the Duke of Lorraine so skilfully, that he forced him to quit the field, and place his army in winter-quarters, at an early period of the year.

* September 27, 1677.

† October 7, 1677.

In the mean time, however, Crequi, although actively opposing the Duke wherever he turned, had been secretly preparing the means of accomplishing a great enterprise ; and no sooner did he see the Imperial army dispersed, than he turned suddenly upon Freiburg, laid siege to that city, pressed it vigorously for five days, and captured it on the 14th of November, before the Duke of Lorraine had even time to assemble his cavalry to relieve it.

Nor were the allies more fortunate in other parts of the world than in Flanders and on the Rhine. A Spanish army had advanced to the frontiers of France from the side of Spain, and entered the Lampourdan, under the Count of Monterey ; but it was encountered by the French under Navailles, and though both parties claim the victory, it would appear that all the efforts of the Spanish general were, to use the mildest term, completely frustrated.

While these events were taking place, negotiations for a peace were proceeding at Nimeguen, where the Count d'Avaux, the Count d'Estrades, and Colbert de Croissy had arrived on the part of the King of France in June 1676. The demands of the allies, however, were excessive, and, thinking that Louis could not long continue a war in which he was pressed by all the neighbouring powers, with the exception of England, and in which even England herself showed a growing inclination to take part against him, they procras-

tinated and hesitated in the hope of bringing down the haughty and dictatorial tone in which he treated. He, on his part, however, seeing his arms successful in all quarters, and his prospects outwardly fair, determined to make greater efforts than ever in order to maintain the preponderance he had acquired ; and he consequently opened the campaign of 1678 in such a manner as appeared well calculated to hasten the proceedings of the adverse negotiators. He allowed the armies of the enemy and his own scarcely a moment's repose, but, in the month of February, proceeded to Lorraine to put himself at the head of his troops, and gave orders for immediately investing Charlemont, Namur, and Luxembourg.

The Dutch and Spaniards turned all their attention to that quarter, neglecting to provide for the safety of the towns of Flanders ; but Louis, by a rapid movement across the country, suddenly appeared before Ghent in the beginning of March, and forced that city to surrender on the 9th of the month, after a siege of only four days. Ypres was then attacked, and though its resistance was protracted to seven days, it also surrendered on the 25th of March ; and Louis returned to Paris, to dictate the terms of peace to the Congress at Nimeguen.

Crequi, at the same time, maintained himself on the German frontier, prevented the Duke of Lorraine from retaking Freiburg, frustrated his efforts

to pass the Rhine, defeated a detachment of his army at Rheinfeld, and, following him closely wherever he turned, attacked and defeated his rear-guard on the 25th of July. He then marched at once upon the fort of Kehl, which defended the bridge of Strasburg, attacked and took it sword in hand, and burned the bridge itself upon the German side of the river; after which he made himself master of the small town of Lichemberg; which was the last act of any importance in the war in Germany.

We must now turn to a train of events which we have hitherto passed over without notice, and which may be considered as an episode upon the general war. I refer to the attempt made by France to separate the island of Sicily from the dominion of Spain.

A revolt had taken place at Messina, and an application had been made to the court of France by the magistrates of that city for aid in opposing the forces of Spain, which country, embarrassed with domestic dissensions and foreign wars, restricted its efforts against the Messenese to a strict blockade. The offers of the Messenese to the King of France were, to place him at once in possession of Messina, and to enable him to obtain the sovereignty of the country.

Some hesitation appears to have taken place before Louis determined to afford the party which called his arms thither, and which was known by

the name of the Malvizzi, the aid that they required. At length, however, he sent a small fleet, under an officer named the Marquiss de Valbelle, with a small supply of grain, troops, and ammunition, to the relief of Messina.

The Marquis de Valbelle found the Messenese almost reduced to despair by famine; but he succeeded in forcing the blockade and entering the port, after which he made a successful attack upon the Spanish lines; and the small assistance thus afforded was followed up by the arrival of a large and powerful armament under the Duke of Vivonne, brother of Madame de Montespan, accompanied by the famous Duquesne, who commanded the fleet, and who had risen from the lowest stations in the French navy to high rank and well-deserved esteem. By this fleet, that of the Spaniards which attempted to oppose its passage was defeated, and the French entering Messina in triumph, overran a great part of the island, driving the Spanish troops before them.

The Spaniards, unable to keep the sea against the fleets of France, called the Dutch to their aid; and though the naval service of Holland had been much neglected, since the conclusion of the treaty of Westminster had relieved the United Provinces from the war with England, De Ruyter again put to sea, and arrived off the coast of Spain, where he met with empty titles of honour, and those far more substantial marks of contumely, arrogance,

and ingratitude, with which the Spanish government has in almost all ages returned the services of its best friends. He did not, however, slacken his efforts in the defence of Spain, but sailed immediately for Sicily, and brought the French fleet to action off the island of Stromboli ; when, after a battle of twelve hours, the victory remained doubtful. Duquesne, however, who commanded the French fleet on this occasion, established for himself the high renown of being an opponent worthy of De Ruyter.

The Dutch fleet, now joined by a Spanish reinforcement, took up a position in the neighbourhood of Messina, which prevented the French fleet from entering that port without making a complete circuit of the island. That, however, was accomplished by Duquesne ; and the Spanish navy, commanded by a more experienced officer than had served in the last battle, followed the Dutch admiral to Agousta, in order to effect a combined attack upon that city, in conjunction with the viceroy, who besieged it by land. Duquesne immediately sailed to relieve Agousta, and an action took place, in which De Ruyter was mortally wounded in both legs by a cannon-ball. He continued to command the fleet, however, remaining stretched upon the quarter-deck, and had the satisfaction of seeing the French fleet driven before the Dutch, though still contending for the victory so gallantly, that the united forces of Spain and Holland were obliged

to abandon their attack upon Agousta. The fleet of De Ruyter sailed for Syracuse to refit; and there that great admiral himself expired of his wounds, ten days after the battle.*

The news of these events reached Louis XIV. while with his army in Flanders, and that monarch expressed deep sorrow for the death of De Ruyter. Some of the courtiers replied in surprise, that it was the greatest advantage that France could have obtained; to which the King rejoined, that he knew it well, but that nevertheless he could not help regretting so illustrious a man.†

As soon as the Dutch and Spanish fleets were ready to put to sea, they sailed for Palermo, where they were attacked again by Duquesne and the Duke of Vivonne, driven into the port with severe loss, and pursued there by the French fire-ships. These destructive engines burned in the port itself eight large vessels, which, blowing up one after the other, greatly damaged the town and the neighbouring ships. Five thousand of the Dutch and Spanish sailors fell in the action, and the two admirals of the allied fleet were amongst the killed.

About the same time, the Spanish army received a sharp defeat from Vivonne. But all these successes failed to counterbalance the faults committed

* In both these battles between Duquesne and De Ruyter, the French claim a victory. I have adopted that version of the story which seems to me the most probable, but I have done so with doubt in regard to many of the particulars.

† Letters of Pelisson.

by the French in their behaviour to the Sicilians. Vivonne himself led the way in pillaging the people. The insolence, brutality, and avidity of the French soldiers, over whom the Duke retained very little restraint, thoroughly disgusted the populace ; and finding that those whom they had called to protect and support them were the first to ill-treat and plunder them, all the inhabitants of Sicily who were not absolutely restrained by the presence of the French, or by hopelessness of pardon from their former rulers, willingly co-operated with the Spaniards. After maintaining for some time Messina, Agousta, and a few unimportant places on the coast, the French evacuated Messina on the 8th of April 1678, and left Sicily to its fate.

The evacuation of Messina was conducted by the celebrated La Feuillade, who, after having restored some degree of discipline and subordination amongst the French troops, affected to be totally occupied upon some great design against another part of the island. Under this pretence, he embarked all the French subjects in Messina, and then informed the unhappy inhabitants of that city that it was his intention to quit the island. He was moved by compassion to take four hundred and fifty of the families who had principally incurred the anger of the Spanish government into the fleet, and transported them to France ; but thousands in a similar situation still remained, and many fell beneath the hands of the executioner.

A number of other enterprises had been carried on in the mean while by the French fleets in different parts of the world, into the details of which enterprises it will be unnecessary to enter here, as they did not tend greatly to influence the general affairs of Europe. That which did tend greatly to affect the state of European politics, however, was the extraordinary, the almost miraculous increase and extension of the French marine. Fourteen years before, scarcely a vessel had been found in the ports of France, scarcely an officer of any distinction was known in her navy. At even a much later period, the French fleets, combined with those of England, had scarcely been able to resist the maritime power of Holland alone, and the aid of France had been counted as little or nothing upon either side in a naval war. But now, on the contrary, the fleets of Louis maintained the sea against Holland and Spain united; and Duquesne, after having dared, not without success, to measure himself with De Ruyter, had driven a powerful fleet into port and burned a part of it, even under the very batteries which supported it. The honour of these actions is due to the officers who commanded and to the men who fought therein; but the existence of such fleets and the production of such seamen must be attributed to Colbert.

The war of which we have lately treated was begun by a great attempt on the part of Louis in the North, and by extraordinary success in Hol-

land. The same success attended his arms in Sicily; though, owing to the inactivity and rapacity of the Duke of Vivonne and others, the advantages obtained by the French in that quarter were not pushed forward as they might have been.* Both these enterprises, however, give us strong examples of great undertakings and brilliant successes, neither founded on just and comprehensive views, nor vigorously supported by after efforts. We shall find the same to have been the case in almost all Louis's warlike undertakings; and, in this respect, they offer a strong contrast to his diplomatic policy, which, with very few exceptions, was vigorous, powerful, and carried on upon clear and undeviating principles, for the attainment of objects often remote, but always definite and ascertained.

The King of France was now engaged in negotiations which required not only all the skill of his ministers, but all that keen diplomatic sagacity which is one of the most remarkable traits in his own character, though one which has been but seldom pointed out. To the general reader the minute details of all those transactions which distinguished the Congress of Nimeguen would be dry and uninteresting, and therefore we can but dwell upon the result; but, at the same time, it may be as well to point out to those who would investigate more deeply, that the letters of Louis himself

* Feuquières, vol. ii. p. 124.

and of his ministers during the progress of the negotiations carried on at that town afford a picture of the monarch's character which shows it in an aspect completely different to that in which it is generally displayed, and depicts him in a totally different light from that in which any other monarch, perhaps, appears in history ; guiding, directing, foreseeing, combating, overcoming, in the difficult warfare of the cabinet, not by the hands of his envoys or the intellects of his ministers, but by his own clear, politic, judicious mind, seeing into all and comprehending all himself.

Immediately after the fall of Ghent and Ypres, Louis announced to the congress the terms which he would grant and accept. He was at that moment successful in every quarter of the globe, with the exception of Sicily : for, besides the conquests which were going on under his own eye, and the brilliant movements of Crequi upon the Rhine, Navailles was proceeding successfully against the Spaniards in the South, and made himself master of the strong post of Puicerda in the end of May.

Thus, then, he announced to the world his determinations as a conqueror ; though there were two points in his situation which tended to render the terms that he demanded moderate when compared with his success. The first of these points, which was obvious to the whole world, was the growing tendency of the people of England to support the cause of the Dutch, and to make a great

effort against the newly-arisen marine of France. The second point was carefully concealed, but was still more cogent. This was the exhaustion of Louis's own finances, which, notwithstanding the mine he possessed in the genius of Colbert, could not afford supplies to carry on such a war much longer. That great minister, indeed, had been driven by the constant drain upon the treasury to have recourse to many of those means of raising money which he most severely deprecated, and he saw at no great distance the necessity of abandoning all his greatest designs for the amelioration of the state of France, if the war did not speedily cease. Every effort, therefore, was made by Colbert to bring it to a conclusion; but a thousand difficulties lay in the way, which could only be removed by fresh expenses, and he pressed upon Louis the necessity of moderation.

With regard to the Dutch, the negotiation was in some degree simple, as they had recovered almost everything which had been taken from them, and they had only to demand that their commerce should be secured, that Maestricht should be restored to them, and that the Spanish Netherlands should be left in such a state as to form a barrier between them and France. Maestricht Louis was ready to give up, their commerce he was not unwilling to favour at the expense of that of England; but the barrier of Flanders, he was determined, should be reduced to as thin a line as possible, not

so much with a view to any future attack upon Holland, as for the purpose of extending his own dominions in a direction where he had long endeavoured to aggrandize himself.

The Prince of Orange and the British people desired to see the war prolonged ; the King of England and the Dutch nation eagerly sought to bring it to a conclusion ; and, under these circumstances, the peace of Nimeguen was concluded, upon the terms which Louis dictated.

The first treaty was that between France and Holland, which was signed on the 10th of August ; the Dutch taking as a pretext for entering into separate arrangements with the enemy before the interests of Spain were secured, the feeble aid which that country afforded in carrying on the war. By this treaty, Maestricht was given up to Holland, due consideration was shown towards her commercial interests, and the nation whom Louis had invaded and so nearly overwhelmed was the only one which lost little or nothing by the war.

Spain, seeing that Holland had concluded her own terms, hastened also to sign the treaty which was already in progress, and gave up to Louis Franche Comté, with the whole of that large tract of land which comprises the towns of Valenciennes, Cambray, Condé, Bouchain, Aire, St. Omer, Ypres, Cassel, Menin, Bavay, Maubeuge, and Charlemont ; in fact, taking in all that part of French Flanders which is now in possession of France, and adding

thereunto the town of Ypres and several inferior places.

The treaty with the Emperor was not signed for several months after that with Spain had been concluded ; but here also the terms agreed to were those which Louis himself proposed. The two princes of Furstemberg were re-established in their territories ; and Prince William, who had been arrested at Cologne in 1674, was set at liberty. The loss and gain upon the banks of the Rhine had been pretty nearly equal on both sides. The Emperor had acquired Philipsburg, and France had acquired Freiburg ; and Louis offered the Emperor his choice of the two, forgetting the remarkable words of Turenne, who had declared that the possession of Philipsburg was worth a province, on account of the immediate entrance which it gave into the heart of Germany. Such was not the case with Freiburg, whence, embarrassed in the mountains of the Black Forest, any armies penetrating from France into Germany were either forced to take a long circuit, or to march through a difficult, defensible, and unproductive country.

The Emperor naturally chose Philipsburg ; and the other terms of the treaty re-established in full force the conditions of the peace of Munster.

The Duke of Lorraine refused to be a party to any of these treaties, and was abandoned, as all petty princes are when their interests impede the march of more potent powers.

Sweden, however, was better treated by Louis than the Duke of Lorraine was by those whom he had served. That country, with very slight variations, had constantly espoused the interests of France, and in so doing had called upon itself the arms of the Elector of Brandenburg on the one hand, and of the King of Denmark on the other. In the war that ensued, Sweden had been the greatest sufferer, and Charles XI. saw himself stripped of a considerable part of his dominions. Louis, however, now came to his aid, and partly by negotiation, partly by a strong demonstration of his purpose to support the Swedish throne by force of arms, he compelled the Elector of Brandenburg to conclude a treaty with Sweden, by which everything was restored to that state which had been taken during the war.

On the very day after the signature of the treaty, however, between Sweden and Brandenburg, which was concluded at St. Germain on the 29th of June, Marshal Crequi, at the head of a body of French troops, advanced to the gates of Minden, and defeated General Spaan, who made a sortie from the town to interrupt his progress. He then marched on and laid some of the territories of the King of Denmark under contribution ; which soon produced that monarch's submission to the will of France.

Thus, even to the three greatest and most powerful of his enemies, Spain, Holland, and the Em-

pire, did Louis XIV, we are assured, dictate the terms of peace. Such, at all events, was the appearance which the transaction assumed ; and such is the colouring given to it by almost all the French historians. Some slight secrets, however, have since appeared, which put a new face upon the affair, which explain how Louis was enabled to exercise this dictation, and which diminish in a considerable degree the air of grandeur and command he assumed upon the occasion.

The King of England acted in the character of mediator ; but the English people showed a strong determination to force their monarch to lay aside that character, and assume offensive operations against France. The Spaniards, Louis well knew, could not support themselves without the aid of the Dutch ; the Dutch saw no end to the war, without the aid of England ; and it so happened that the English king and the Dutch people were both peculiarly susceptible to the influence of gold.

If Louis negotiated with every one skilfully and wisely —if he fought every one resolutely and valiantly, he also bribed every one boldly and unblushingly ; and while there cannot be the slightest doubt that a number of the most influential men at the Hague and at Amsterdam were in the pay of the French King, and were pledged to oppose the warlike inclinations of the Prince of Orange with all their power, we find Louis and his ministers bidding higher and higher sums for Charles II.

and the principal members of his council, as the necessity of the case required. Lord Danby was offered a considerable bribe, in money, bills, or jewels : Charles himself received an offer of a great sum to give his consent and support to the terms which Louis proposed ; and on the 27th of May 1678, the English King concluded a secret treaty with Louis, by which he bound himself not to assist the Dutch or Spaniards if in two months they had not accepted the terms of France ; while, to prevent the interference of parliament, the English monarch engaged to prorogue the houses for four months after the two months specified had expired. For this piece of villany he was to receive the sum of six millions of francs ; and he afterwards remarked, with simplicity enough, that if the Dutch would have a peace upon French terms, and France offered money for his consent to that which he could not help, he did not see why he should not get the money.* Having bribed the King, Louis next attempted to bribe the parliament of Great Britain : in what degree he was successful it is dif-

* See Courtenay's Sir William Temple, and also the keen and elaborate investigation given to the intrigues of the court of France with the court of England, in Lord John Russell's History of Lord William Russell. It is there proved, that, in all probability, many of the sums said to have been given by Barillon to members of the English parliament were never received, and probably embezzled either by Barillon himself or his agents. See from page 197, to the end of Chapter X.

ficult to say, but certainly not to the extent that he himself believed.

The war between France and Holland was concluded by one of those acts which leave the darkest stain upon the human character, and make us almost feel ashamed of our common nature. Peace with the United Provinces had been signed at Nimeguen on the 10th of August; the fact was well known in the French camp by the 14th, and ~~ought to have been known even at an earlier period in the army of the Prince of Orange.~~ Peace, however, was not concluded with the Spaniards, and the Duke of Luxembourg was encamped at St. Denis, in the neighbourhood of Mons, which town he held in a state of blockade. The Duke of Luxembourg's army was posted on some heights, with a rivulet below, and with the abbey of St. Denis, on the other side of the rivulet, occupied by his infantry. Upon this abbey the Prince of Orange made an attack upon the 14th of August, with the view, it would appear, of forcing Luxembourg to a general battle. In this, however, he did not succeed. The two main bodies remained in battle array upon two opposite heights during the whole day, while the combat was continued in the neighbourhood of the abbey of St. Denis, and near the farm of Casteau, by detachments from the several armies. The contest was long and severe; but we have the best authority for saying that the

French troops did not yield an inch of ground, and that William of Orange only gained the dishonourable reputation of having attacked the French army in the time of peace.*

* The account of Voltaire is altogether different. He says that Luxembourg was taken by surprise, that his quarters were forced, and that the field remained in the hands of the Prince of Orange. There is, doubtless, authority to be found for every thing in the world; but the account which I have taken as my guide is that of the Marquis de Feuquière, who has investigated the conduct of the abbey of St. Denis, and written a history upon the conduct of all parties.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

LONDON :

PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Dorset Street, Fleet Street.

